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85

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INVINCIBLE



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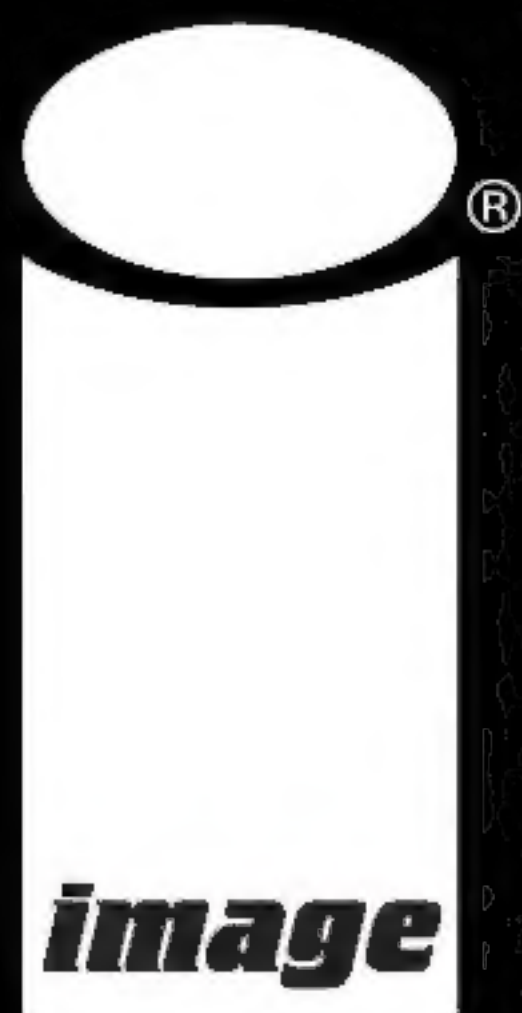


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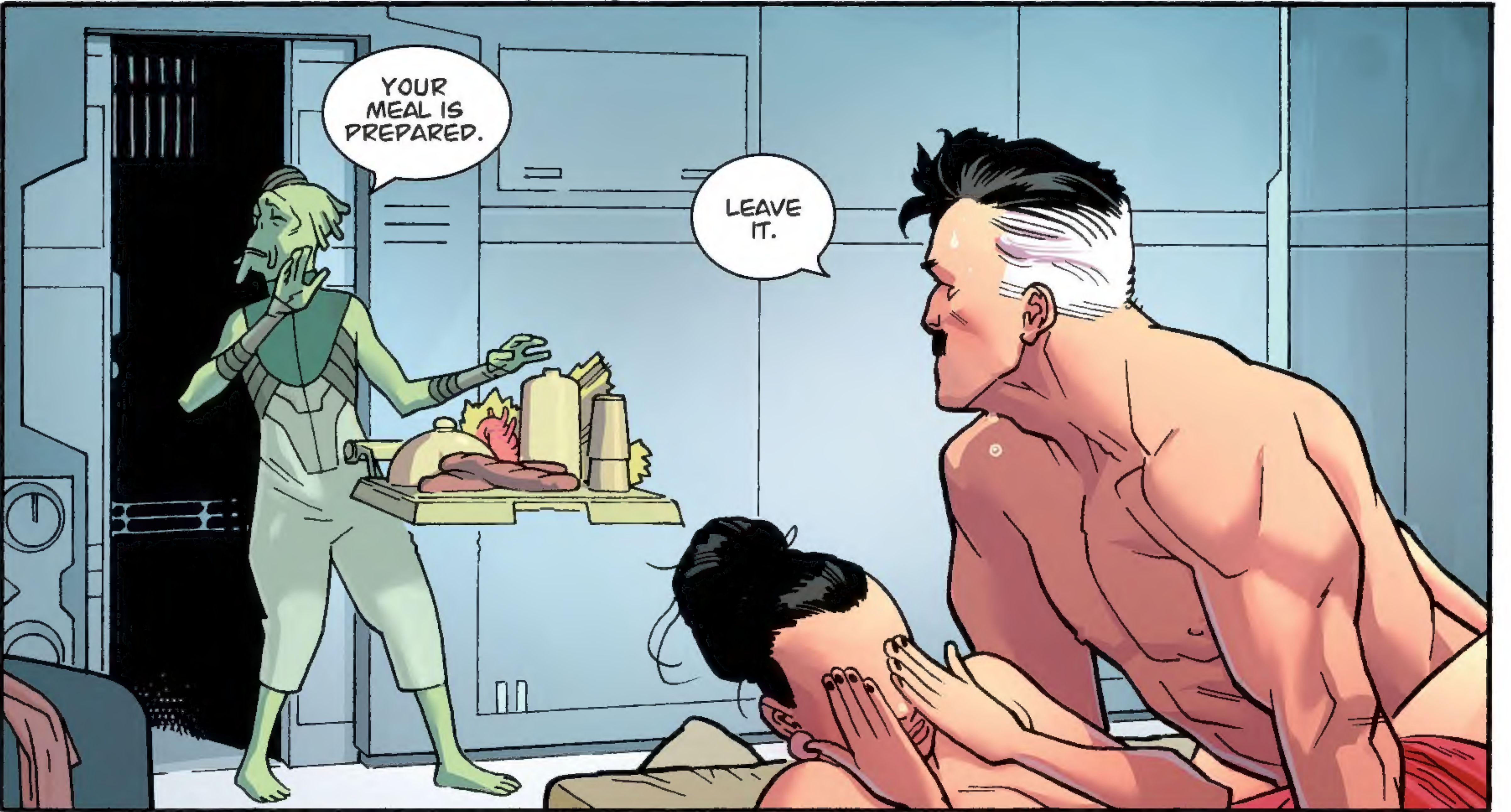
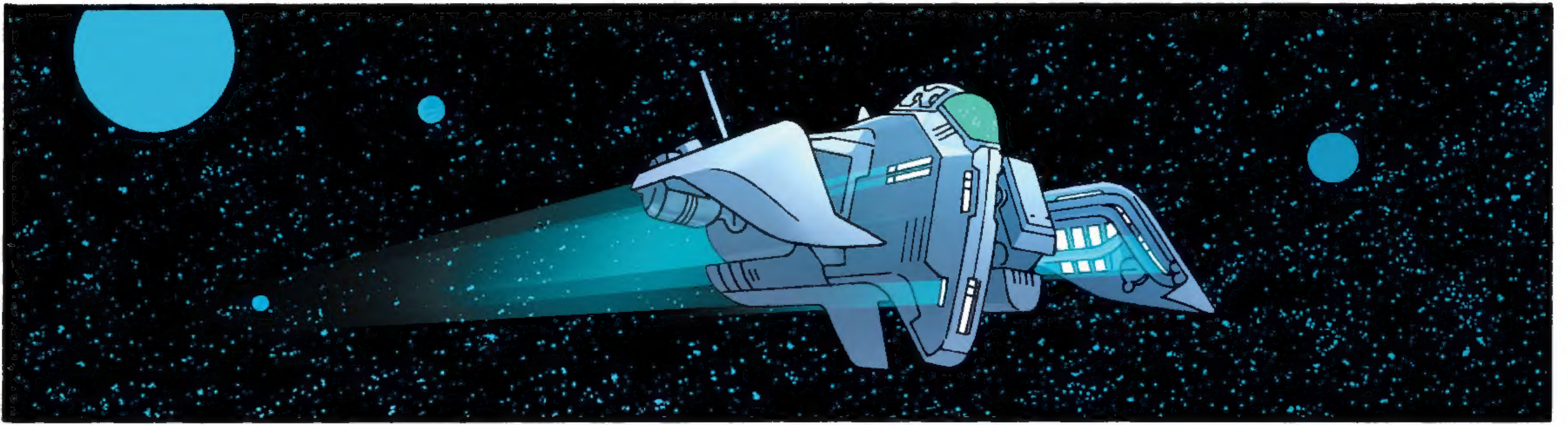
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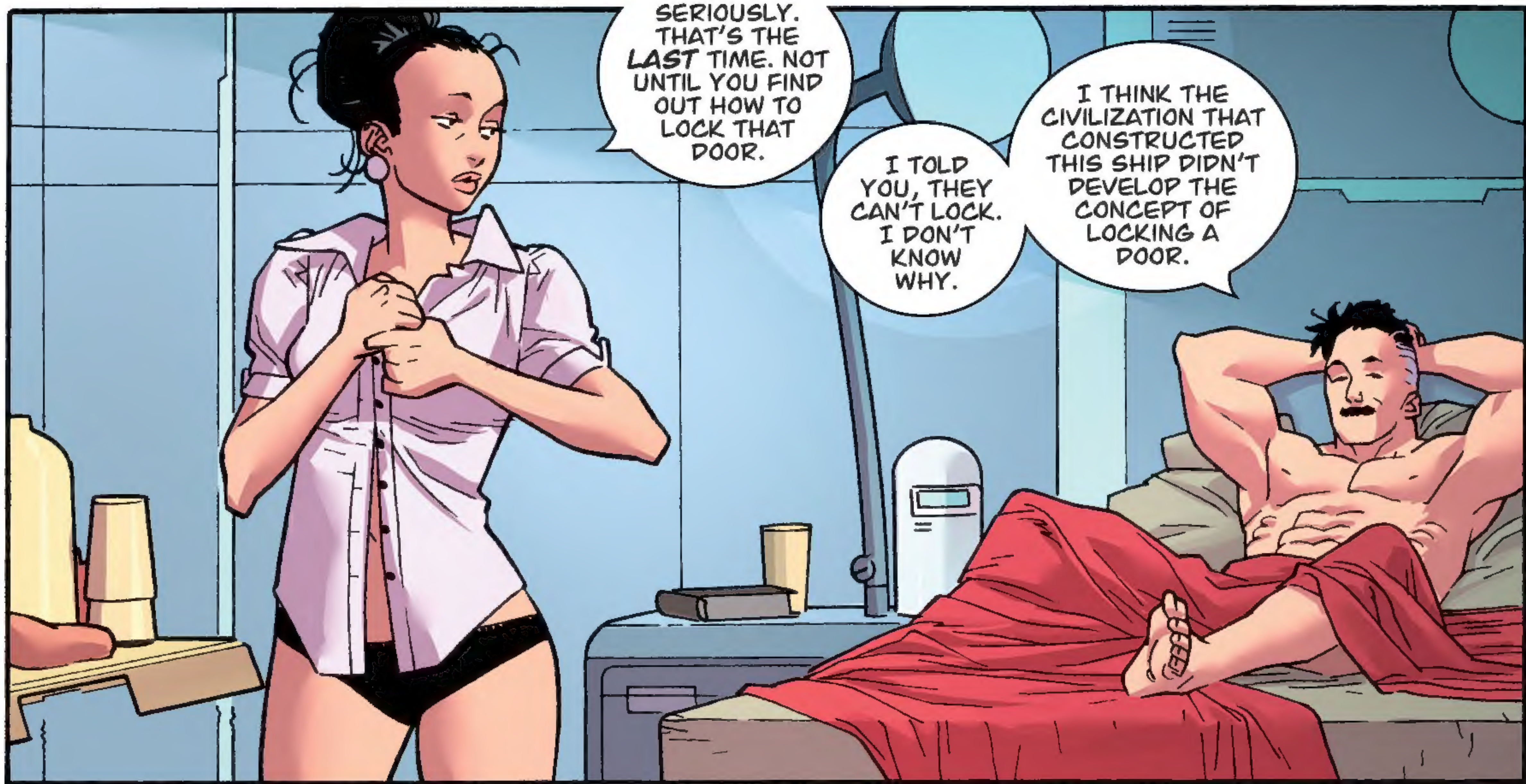
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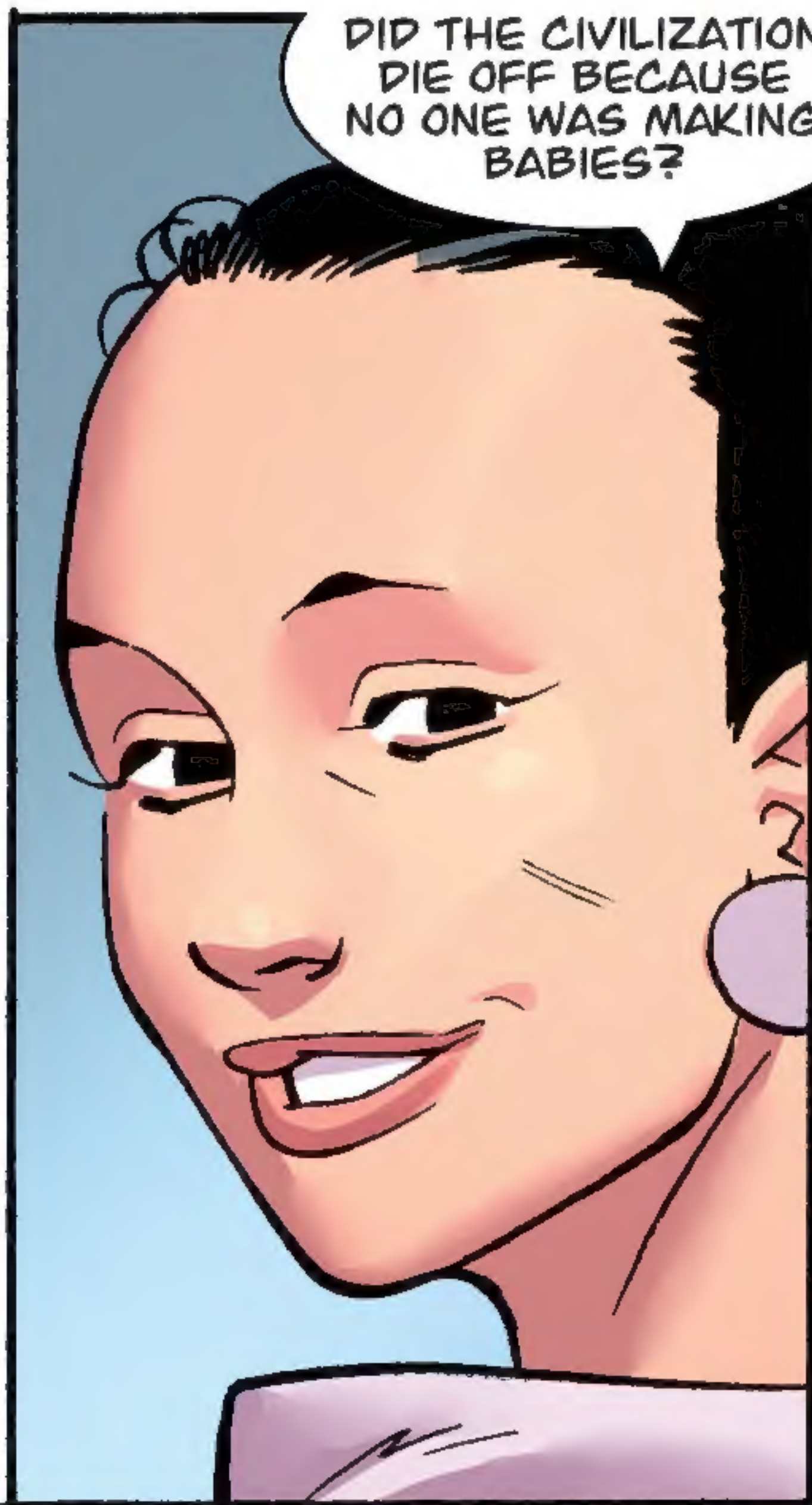




SERIOUSLY. THAT'S THE LAST TIME. NOT UNTIL YOU FIND OUT HOW TO LOCK THAT DOOR.

I TOLD YOU, THEY CAN'T LOCK. I DON'T KNOW WHY.

I THINK THE CIVILIZATION THAT CONSTRUCTED THIS SHIP DIDN'T DEVELOP THE CONCEPT OF LOCKING A DOOR.



DID THE CIVILIZATION DIE OFF BECAUSE NO ONE WAS MAKING BABIES?

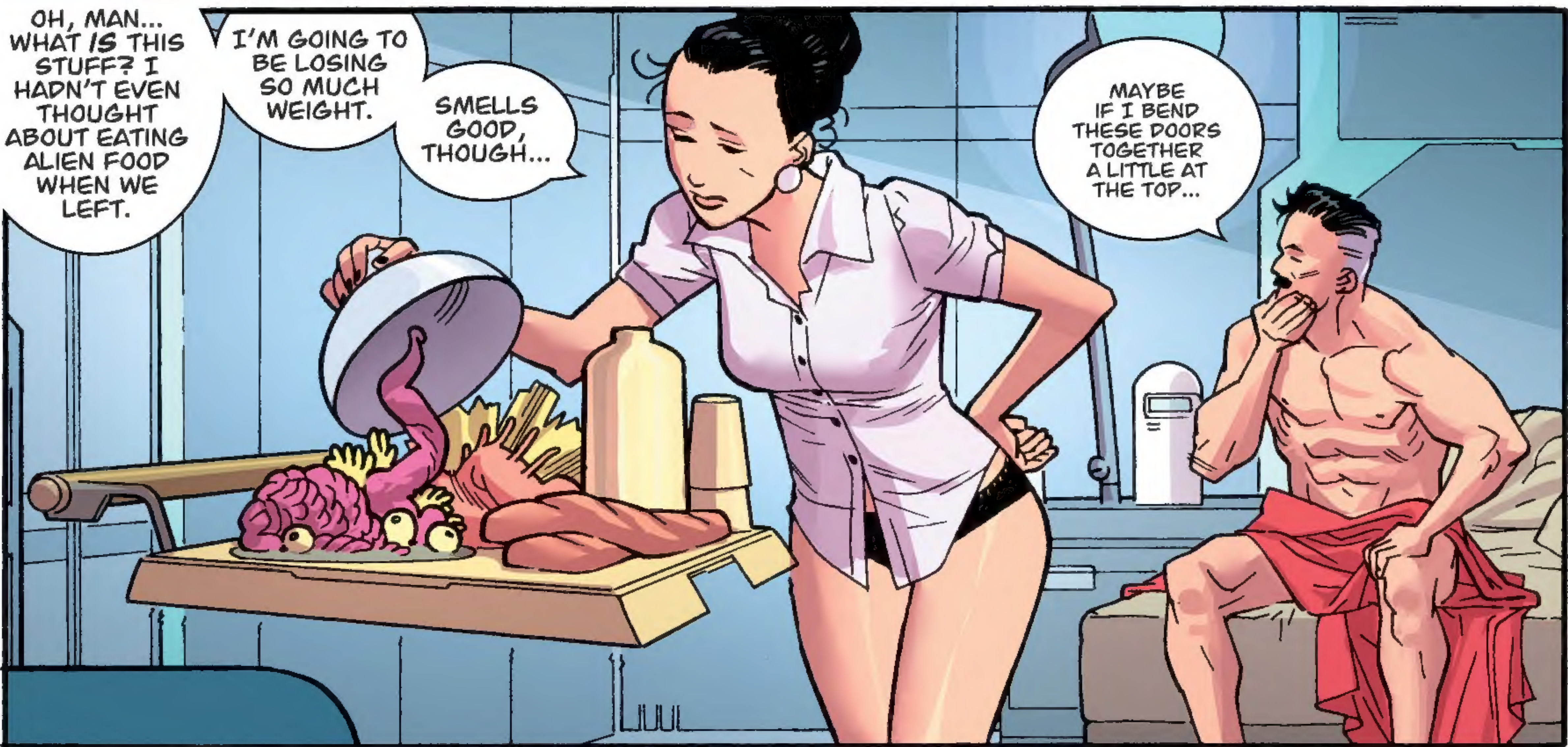


MAYBE THEY WERE STUCK IN SPACE SHIPS FOR DAYS ON END WITH NOTHING ELSE TO DO SO THEY DIDN'T GIVE A DAMN WHO SAW?



HEY, I WASN'T JOKING. YOU'RE CUT OFF.

WHAT?

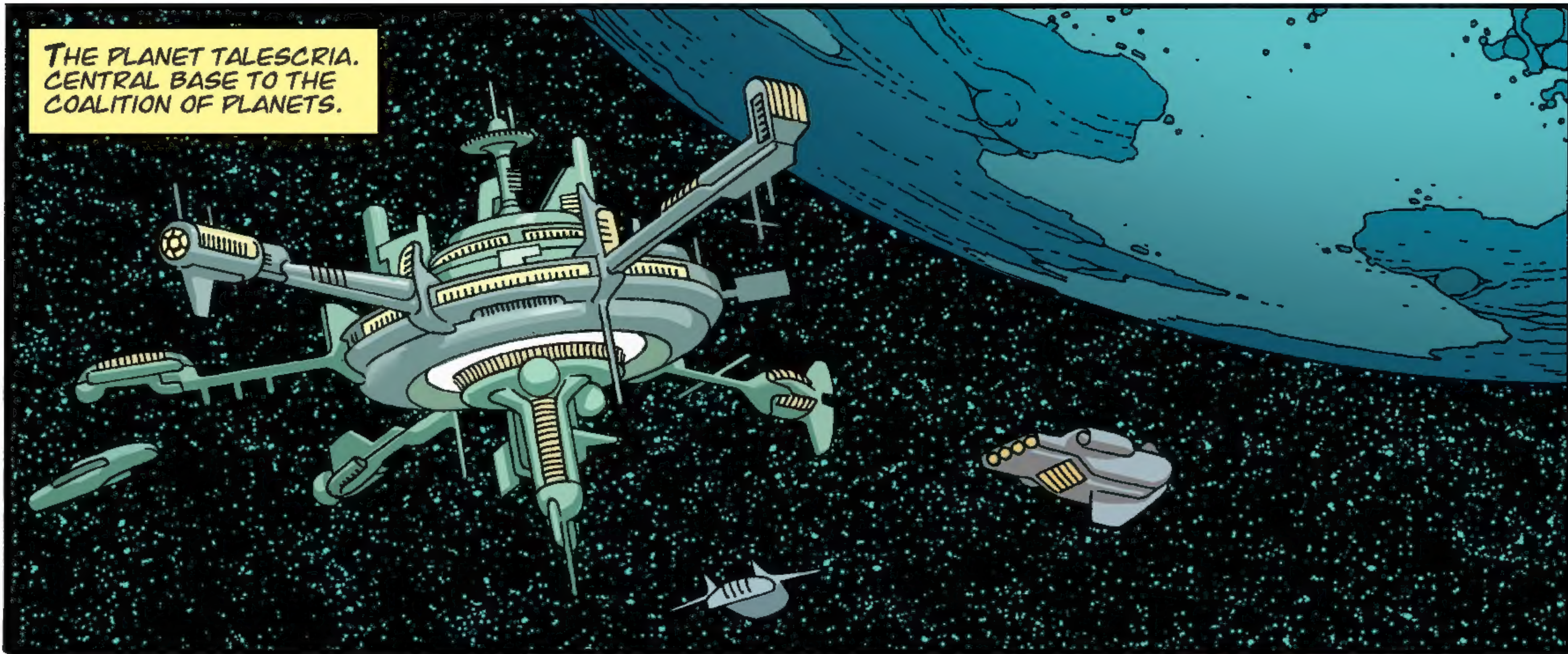


OH, MAN... WHAT IS THIS STUFF? I HADN'T EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT EATING ALIEN FOOD WHEN WE LEFT.

I'M GOING TO BE LOSING SO MUCH WEIGHT.

SMELLS GOOD, THOUGH...

MAYBE IF I BEND THESE DOORS TOGETHER A LITTLE AT THE TOP...



THE PLANET TALESRIA.
CENTRAL BASE TO THE
COALITION OF PLANETS.



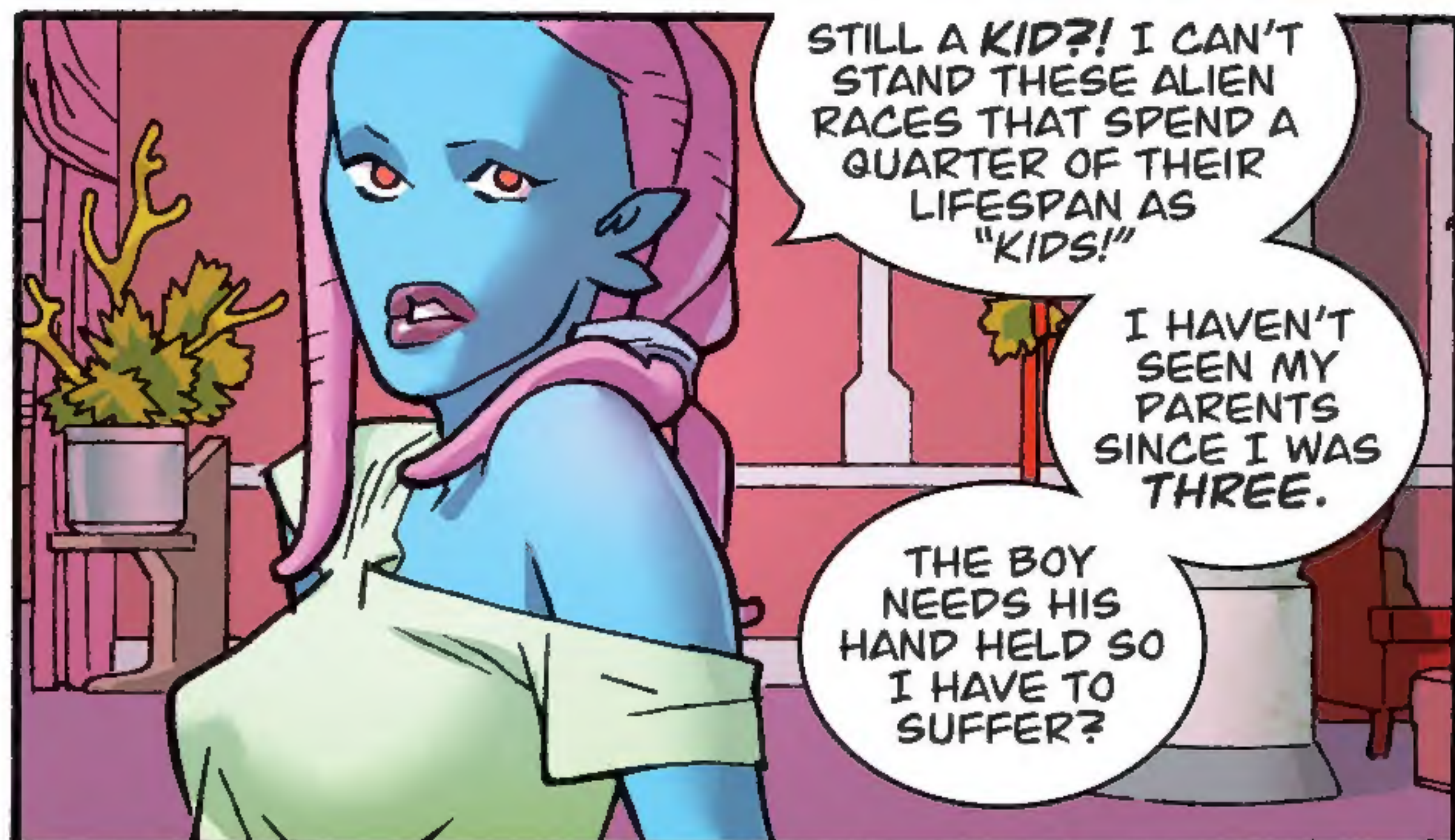
SERIOUSLY, HE HAS
TO GO. EVER SINCE
HE WALKED IN ON US
YOU JUST HAVEN'T
BEEN THE
SAME.

YOU'VE BEEN
HOLDING BACK
ON ME--ADMIT IT.
WHO CARES WHAT
HE SAW? HE
KNOWS WHAT
PEOPLE DO!

I DON'T
UNDERSTAND
WHY HE CAN'T
JUST STAY AT
NOLAN'S PLACE
UNTIL HE
GETS
BACK!

HE'S JUST A
KID. I CAN'T
LEAVE HIM
ALONE IN THIS
CITY.

NOLAN
WOULD BE
PISSSED.



STILL A KID?! I CAN'T
STAND THESE ALIEN
RACES THAT SPEND A
QUARTER OF THEIR
LIFESPAN AS
"KIDS!"

I HAVEN'T
SEEN MY
PARENTS
SINCE I WAS
THREE.

THE BOY
NEEDS HIS
HAND HELD SO
I HAVE TO
SUFFER?

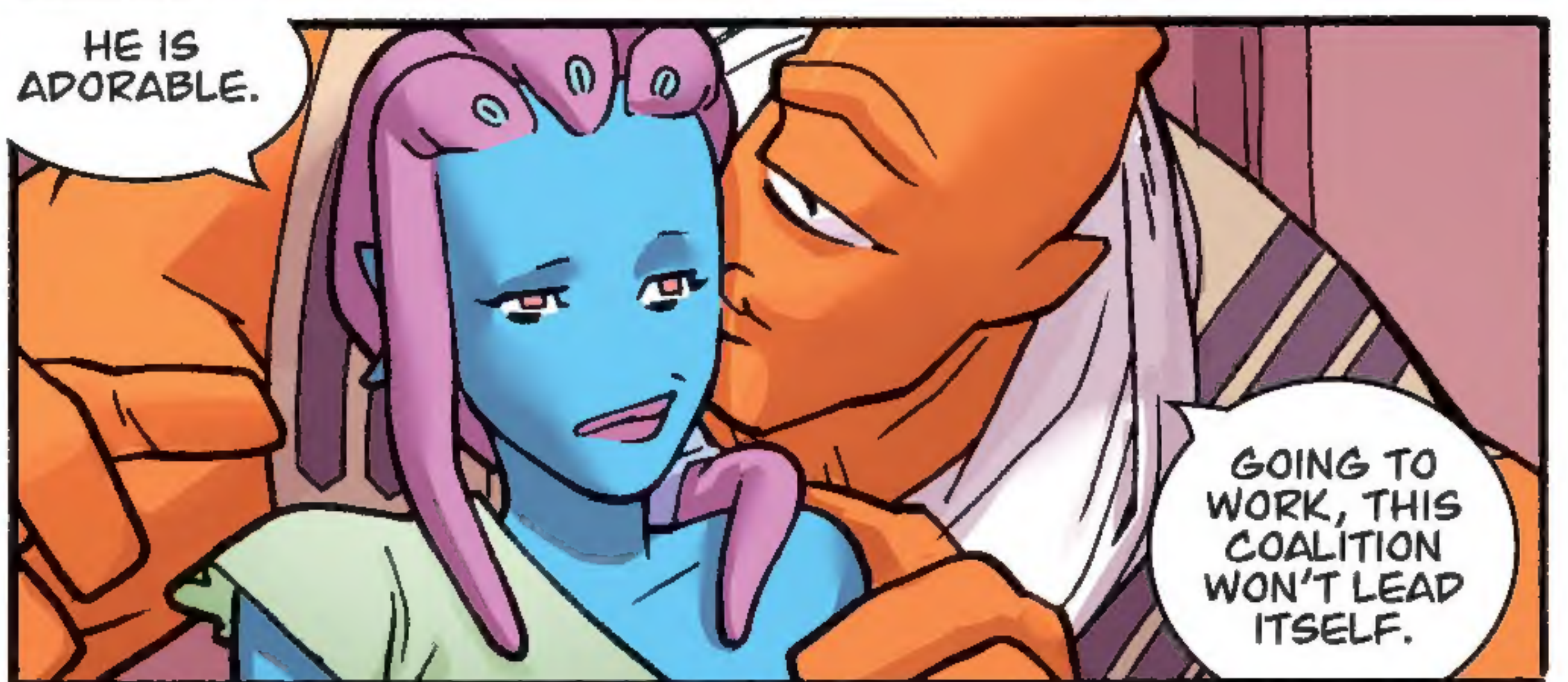


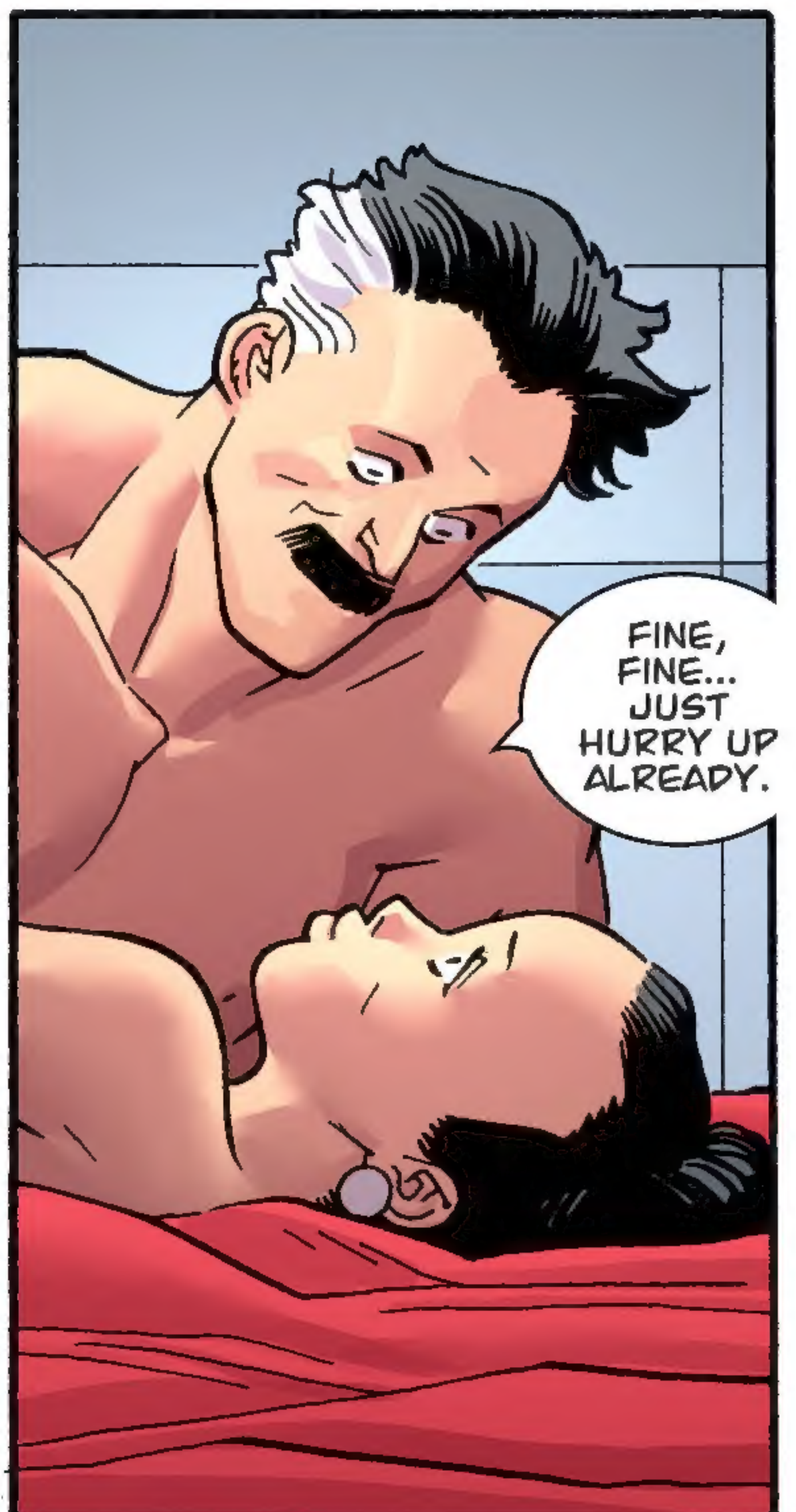
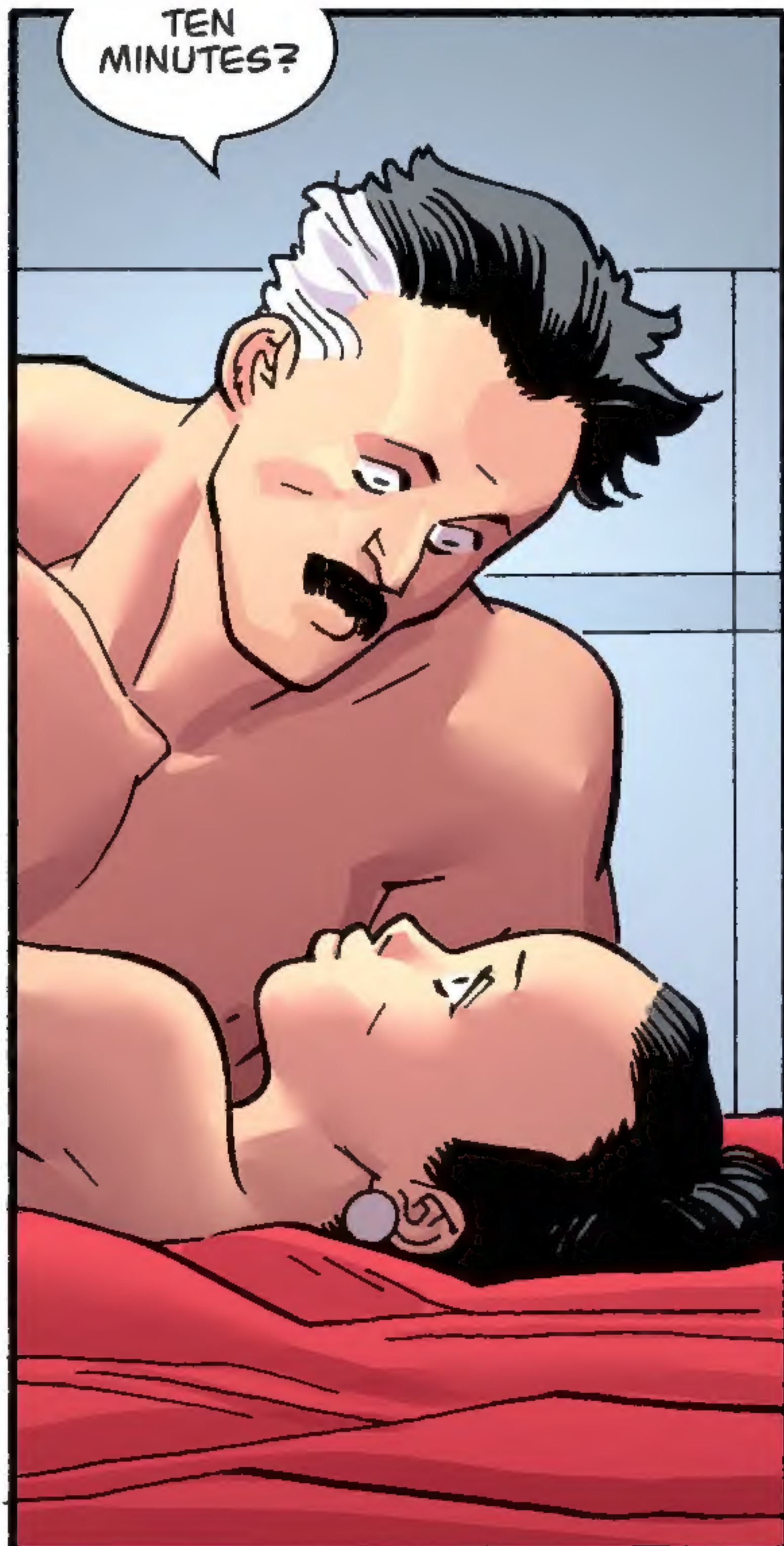
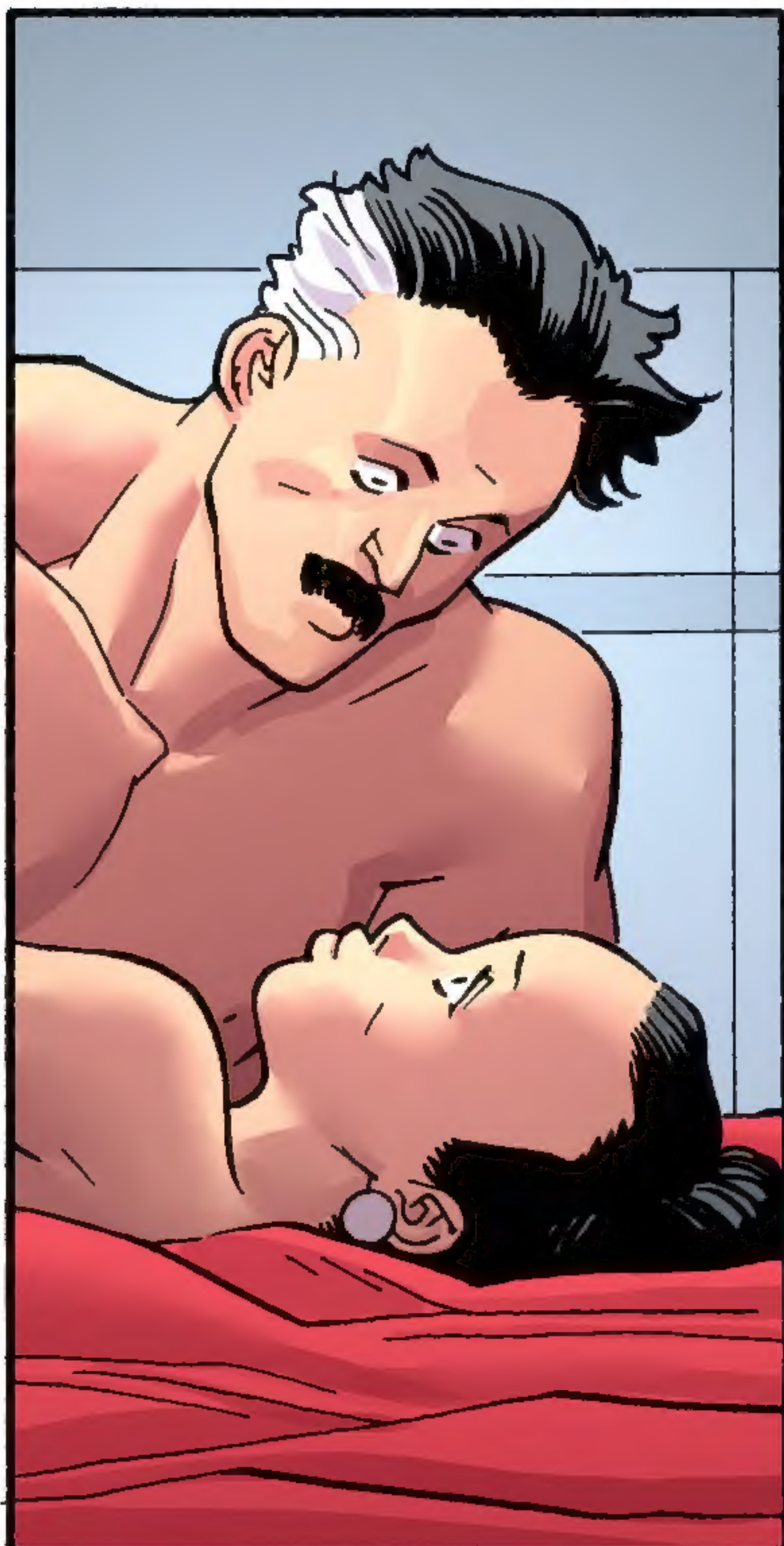
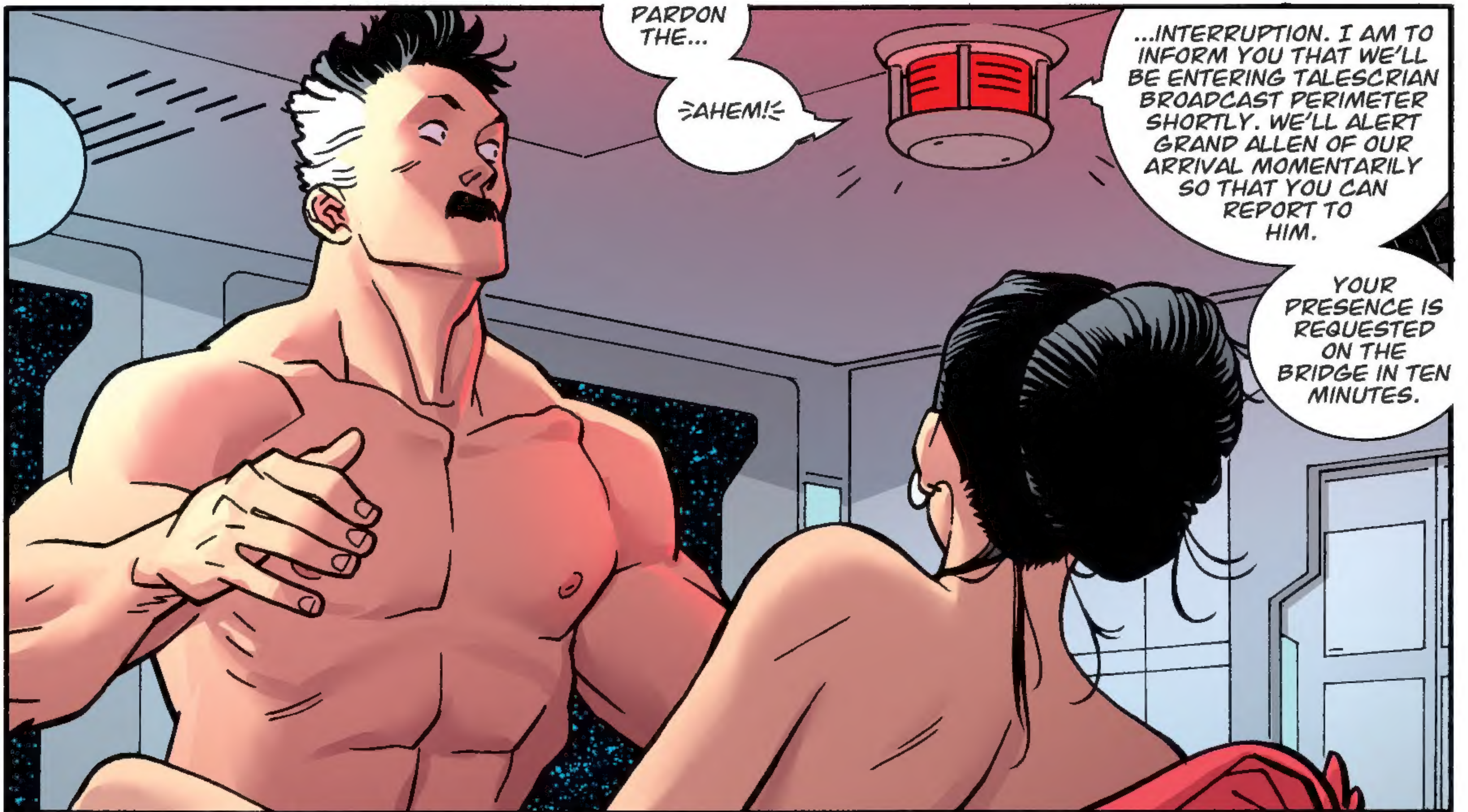
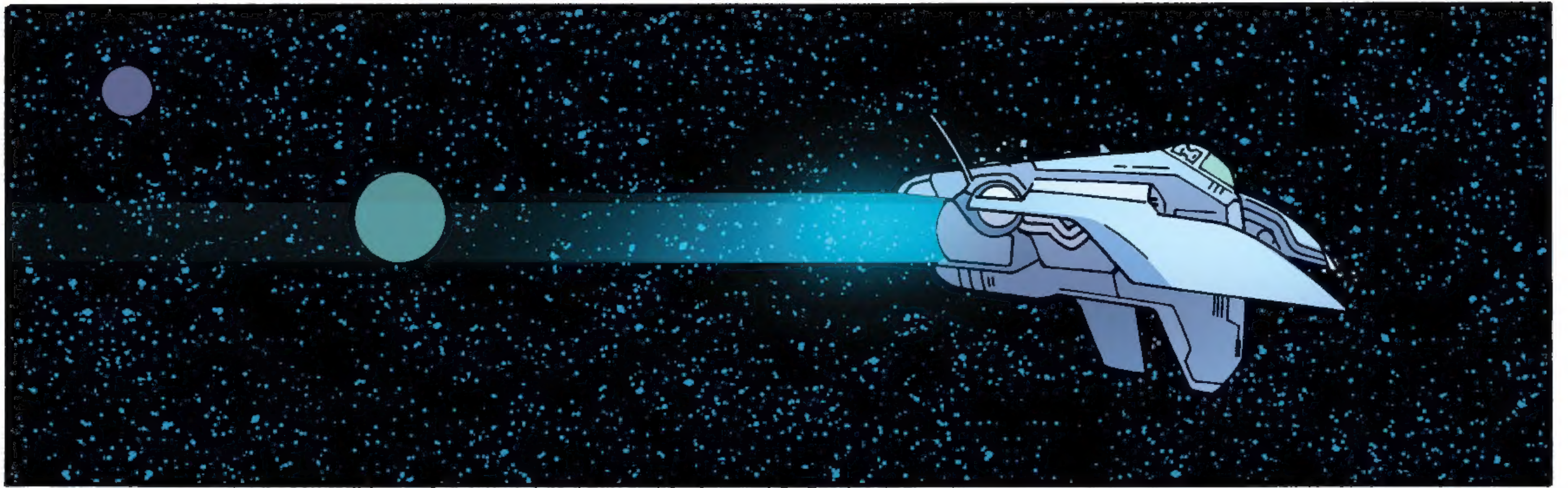
JUST
LISTEN TO
YOURSELF,
TELIA.

SOMETIMES
I'M RELIEVED
THAT OUR
SPECIES CAN'T
PRODUCE
OFFSPRING
TOGETHER.



...
NOT
COOL,
ALLEN.
NOT
COOL.







I EXPECT
PROGRESS!

SOMETHING
MUST BE
DONE!

I'M DOING
EVERYTHING
I CAN,
AMBASSADOR.

I HAVE
PATROL TEAMS
CRISSCROSSING
THE GALAXY,
LOOKING FOR ANY
SIGN OF THE
VILTRUMITES.

ON A HUNCH,
ONE TEAM WENT
TO A DISTANT PLANET
CALLED EARTH. THE
VILTRUMITES HAVE A
SPECIAL INTEREST IN
THAT PLANET... THEY
MAY HAVE GONE THERE,
BUT I HAVEN'T
HEARD BACK FROM
THAT TEAM.



YOU HAVEN'T
HEARD FROM
THEM? HOW DO
YOU KNOW THEY
HAVEN'T FOUND THE
VILTRUMITES AND
BEEN KILLED BY
THEM, HOW LONG
HAVE THEY
BEEN AWAY?



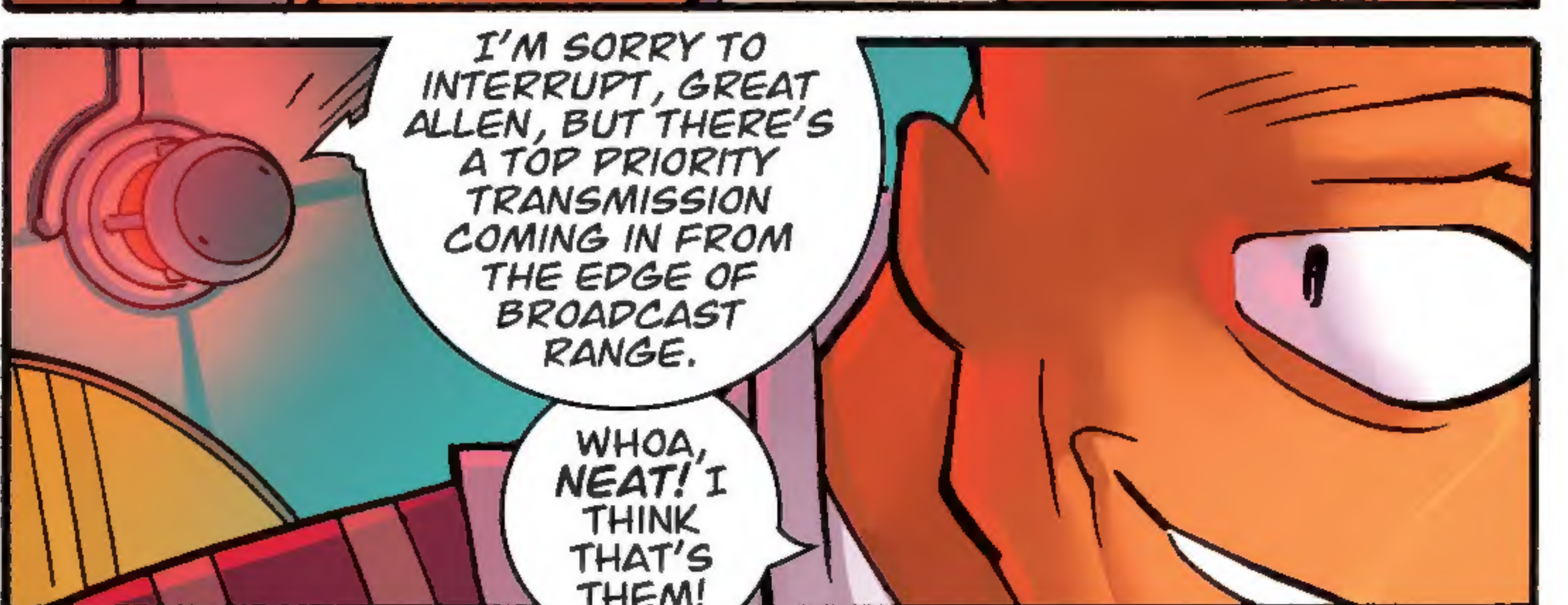
THE PLANET IS SO DISTANT
WE CAN'T SEND OR RECEIVE
TRANSMISSIONS. IF OUR
CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT,
AND THEY TRAVELED THERE
AND CAME STRAIGHT BACK...
THEY WOULD HAVE
RETURNED A FEW
DAYS AGO.

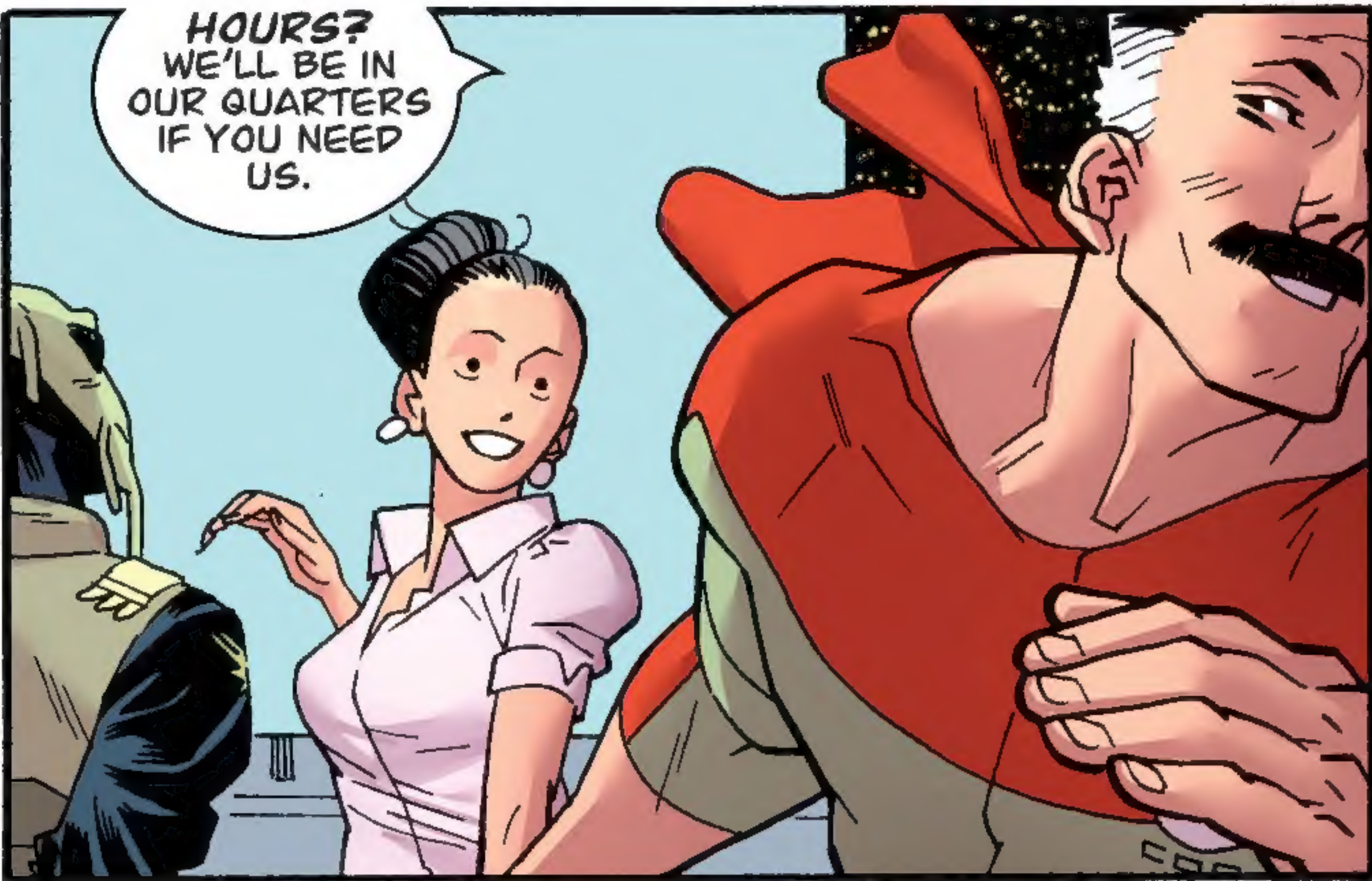
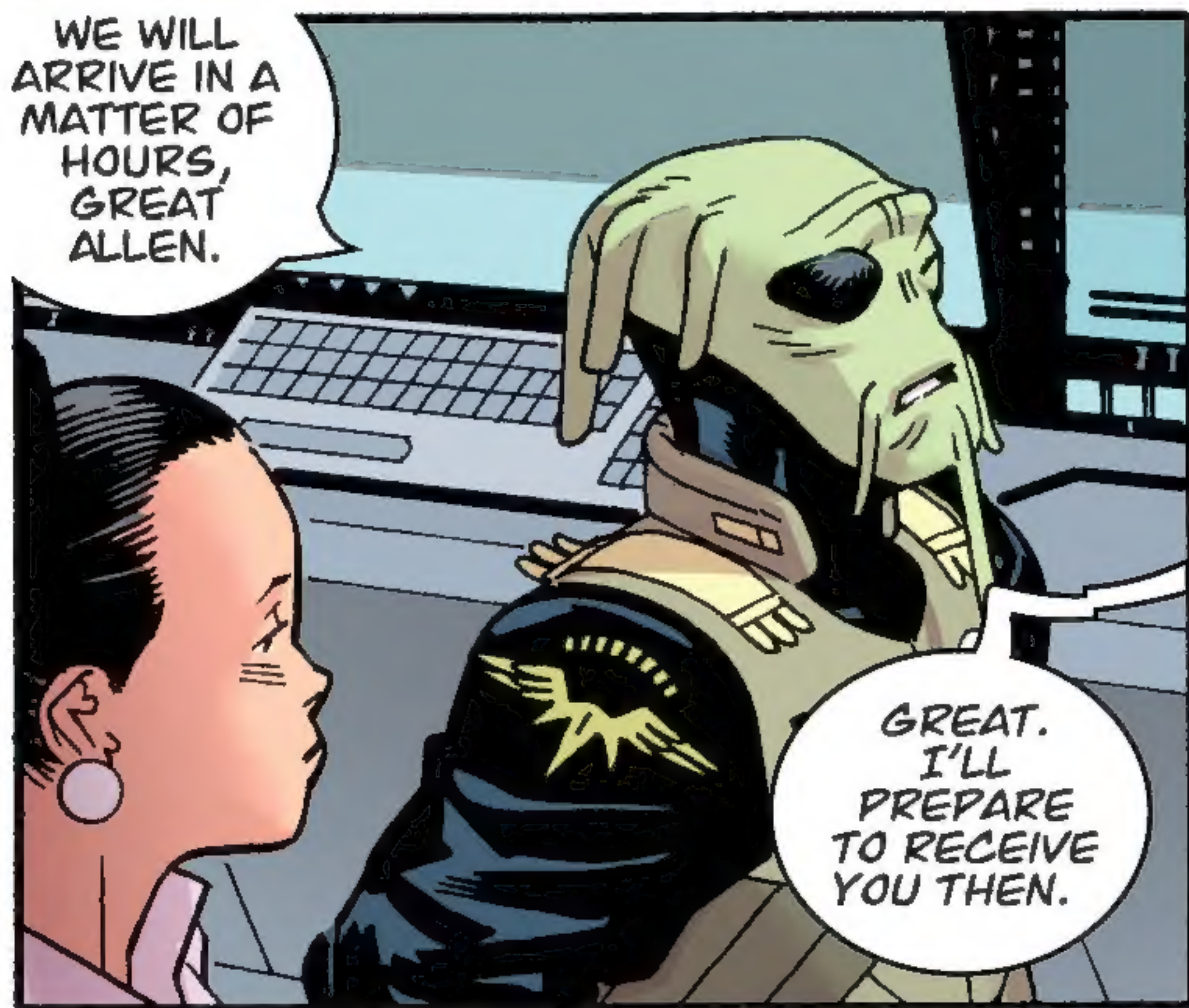
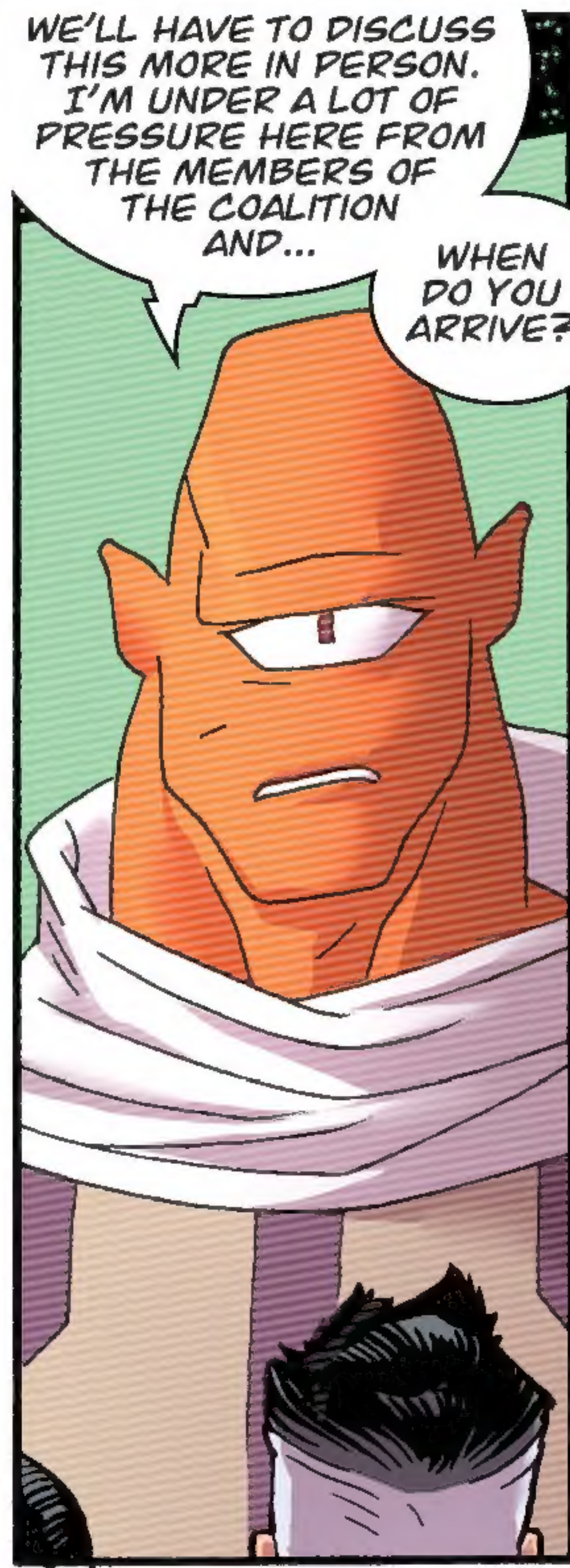
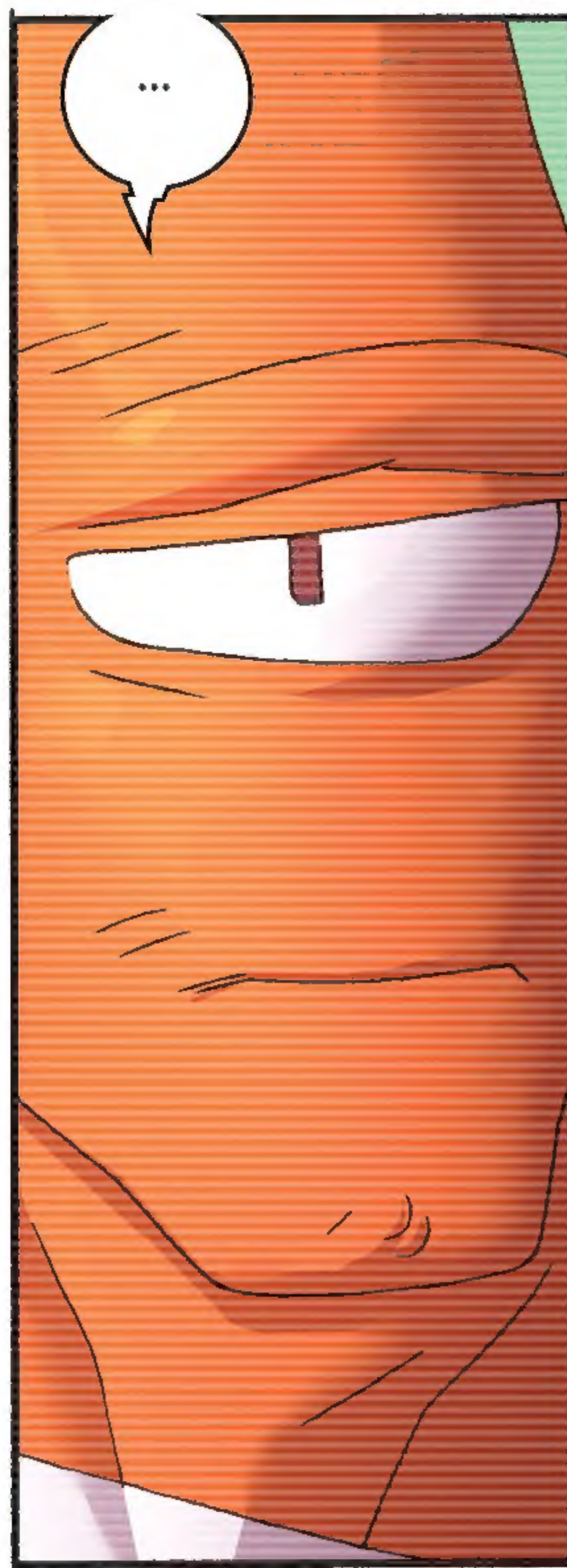
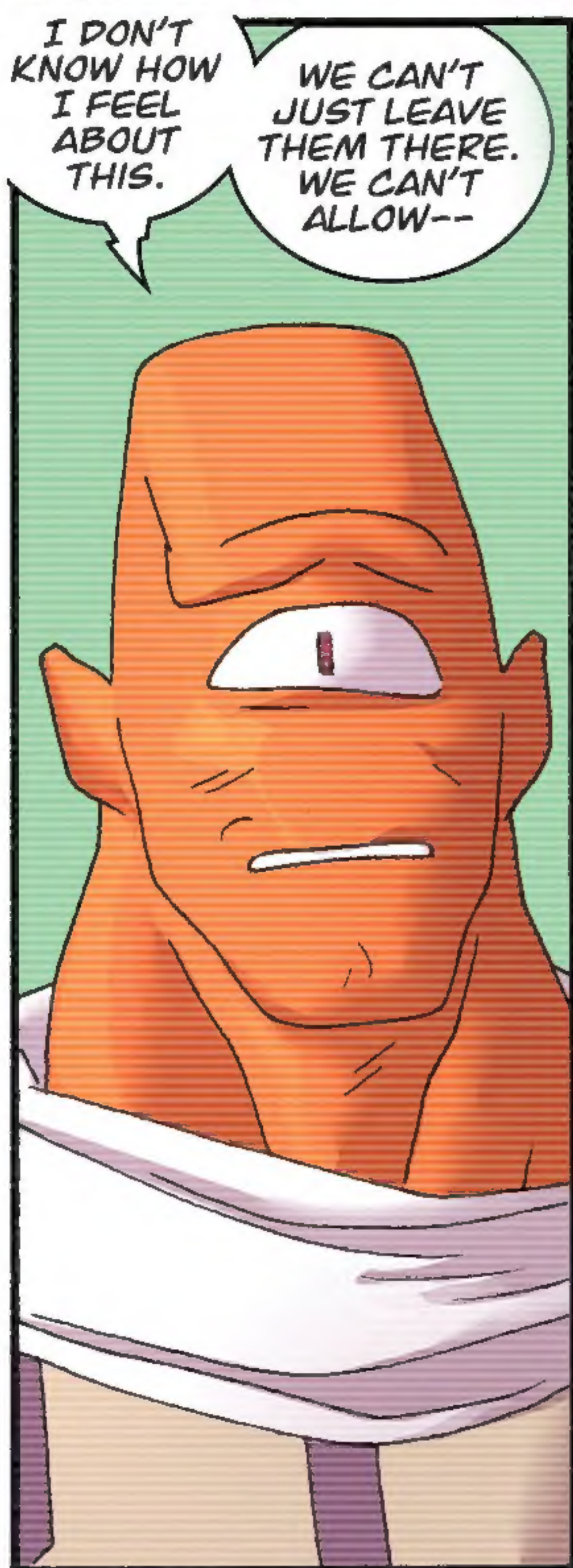
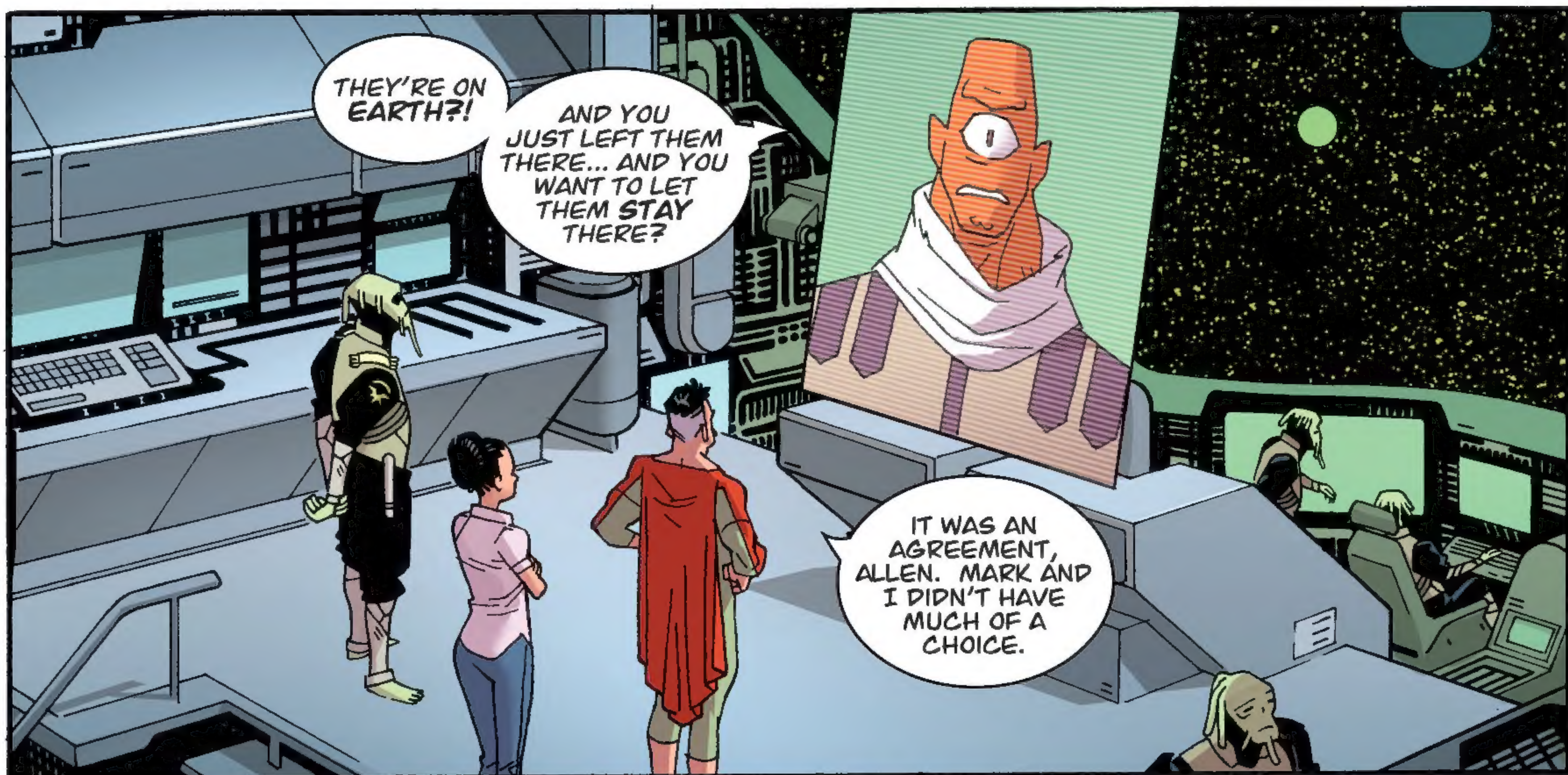
IF WE
DON'T HEAR
FROM THEM
SOON, I'LL
SEND--

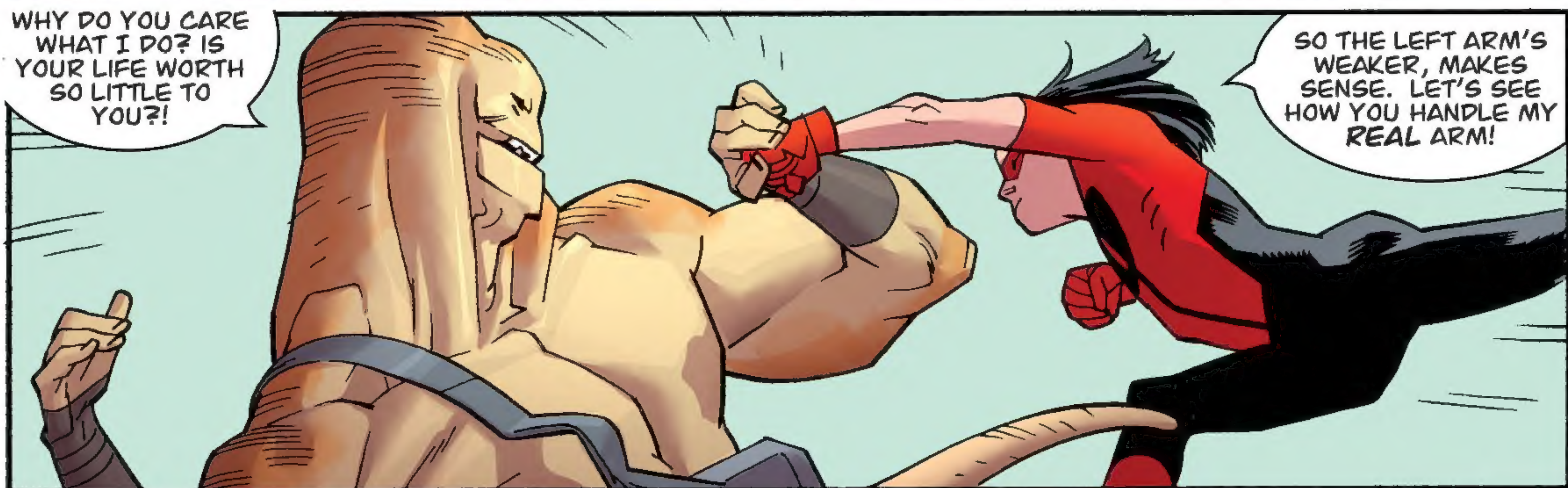


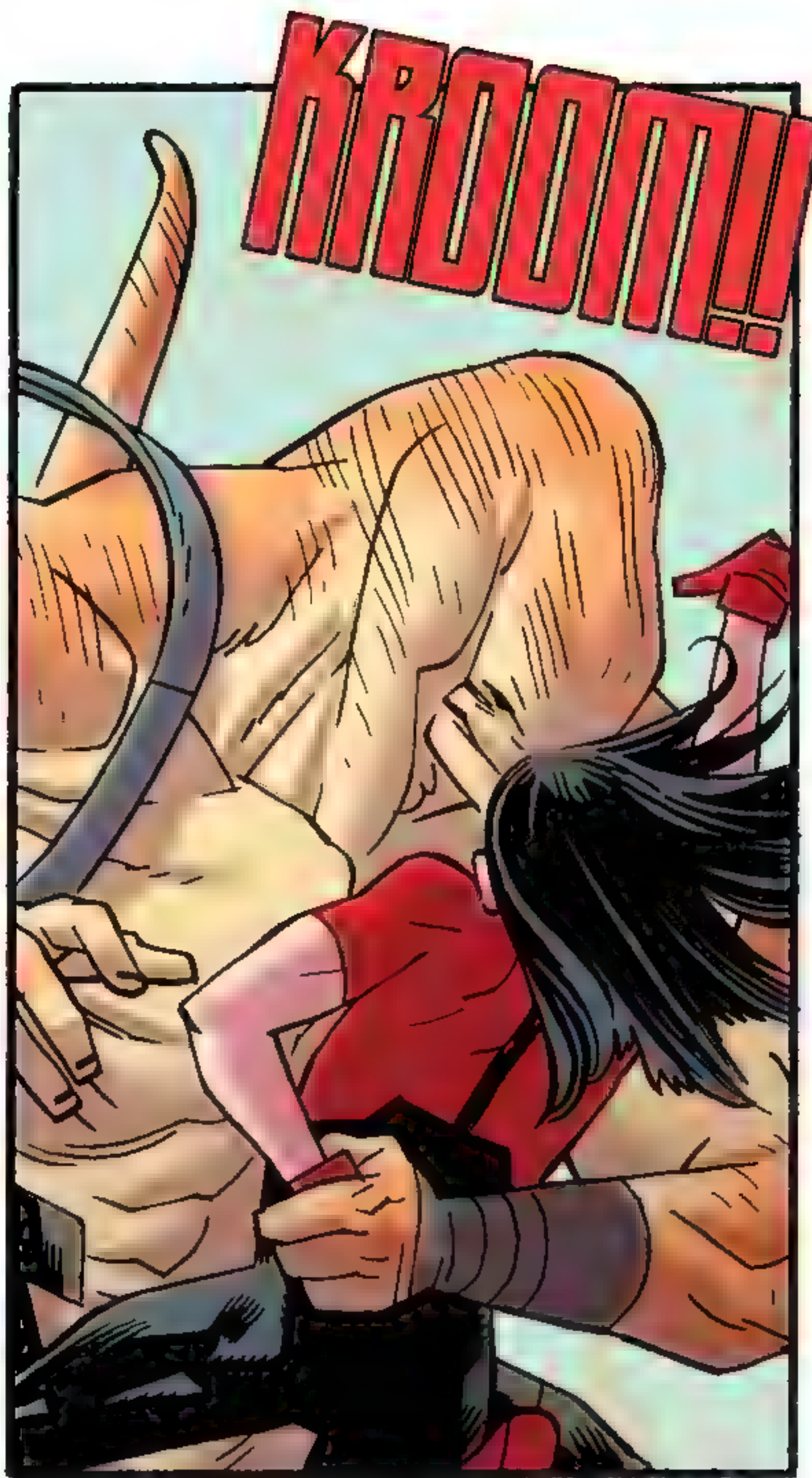
I'M SORRY TO
INTERRUPT, GREAT
ALLEN, BUT THERE'S
A TOP PRIORITY
TRANSMISSION
COMING IN FROM
THE EDGE OF
BROADCAST
RANGE.

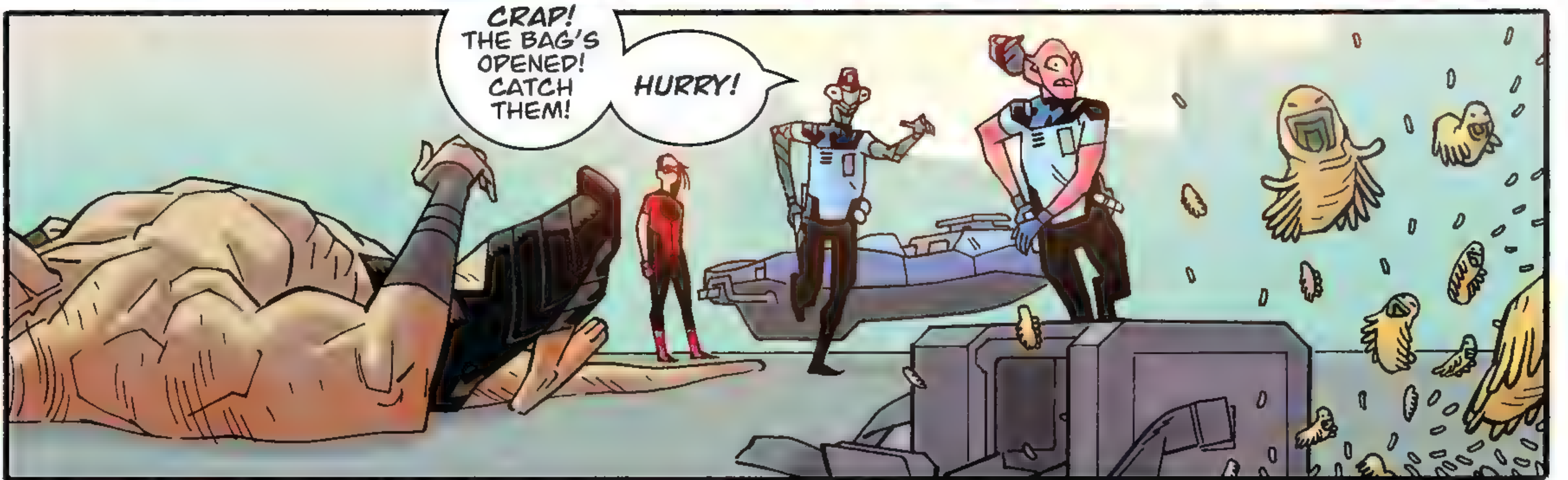
WHOA,
NEAT! I
THINK
THAT'S
THEM!

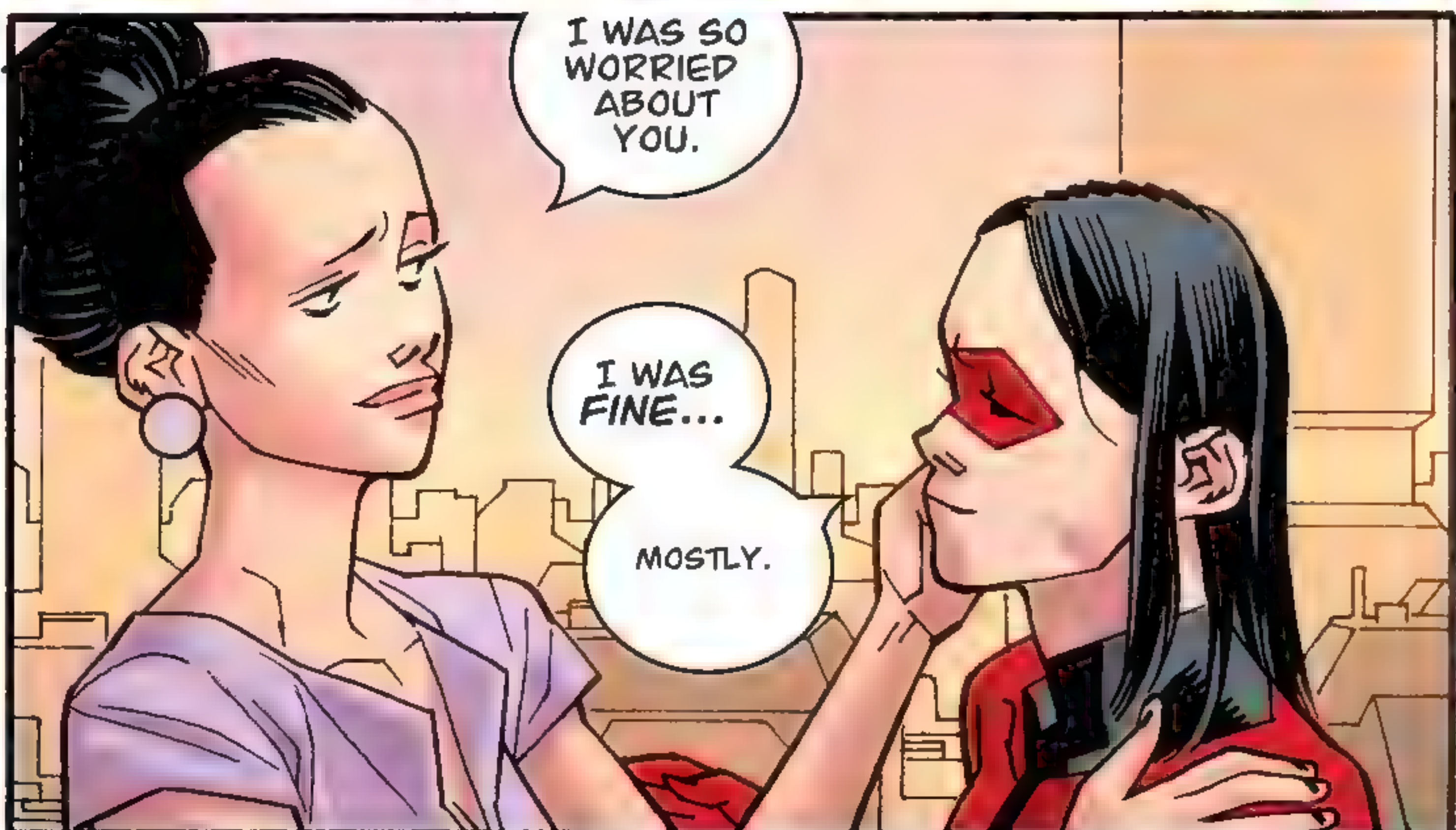
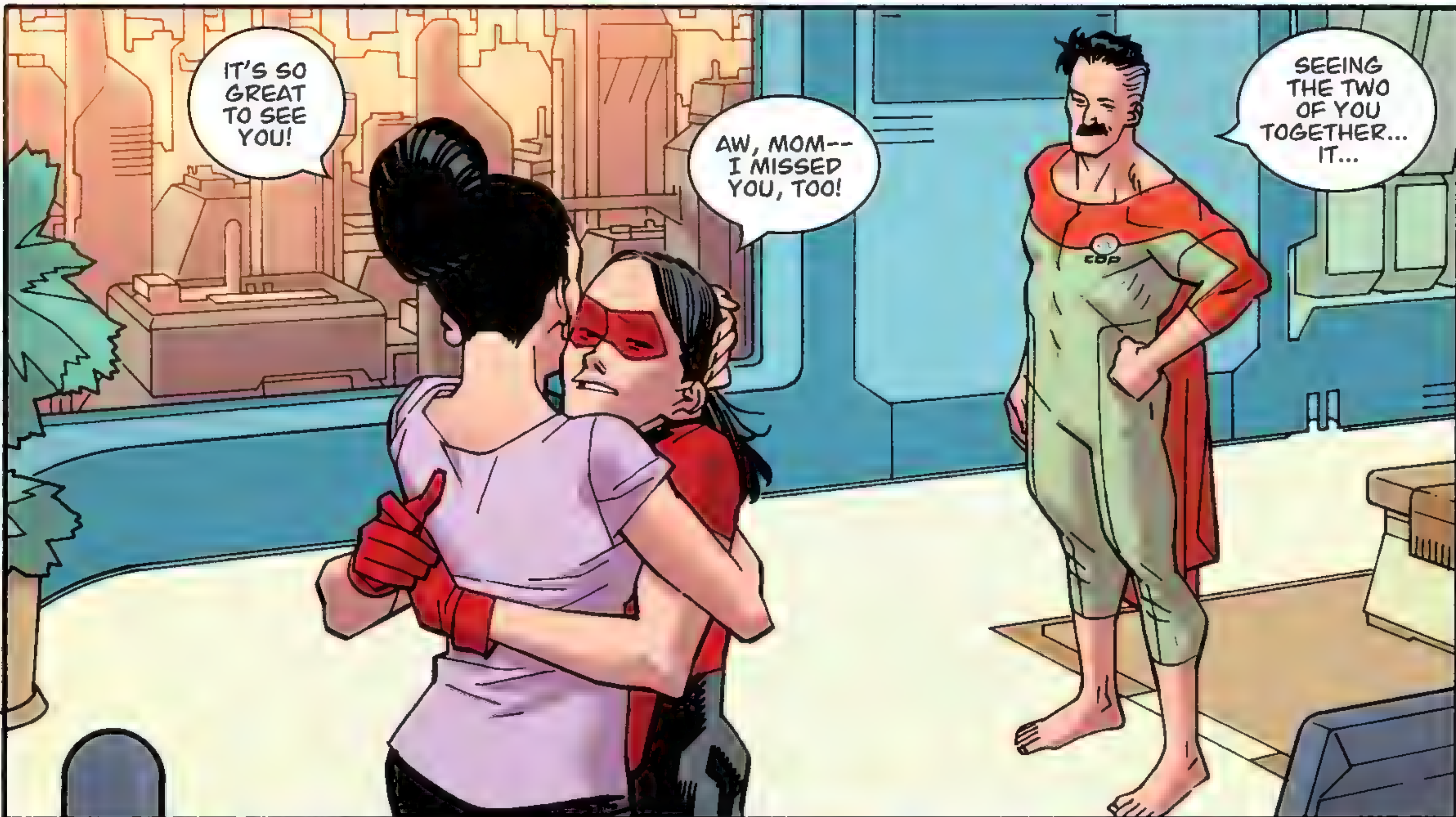














DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA THE POSITION YOU'VE PUT ME IN?

I KNOW IT SEEMS LIKE A BAD IDEA, BUT HEAR ME OUT--

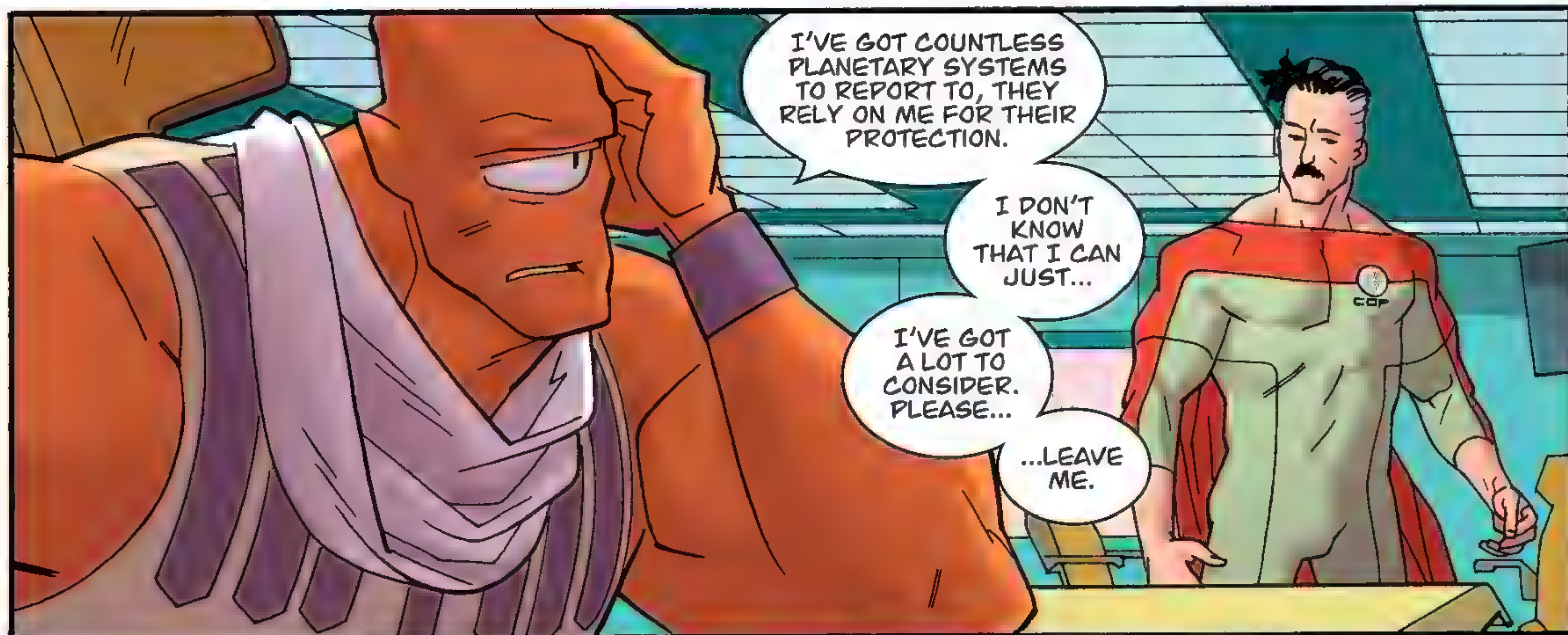
BAD IDEA?! IT'S A HORRIBLE IDEA! WE HAD THE VILTRUMITES ON THE RUN-- THEIR RANKS DEPLETED!

YOU PROPOSE WE LEAVE THEM ALONE--ON EARTH, WHICH IS ESSENTIALLY A BREEDING CAMP!

I SHARE YOUR CONCERN, BUT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT YEARS--DECADES OF LIVING WITH HUMANS IN ORDER TO ADD TO THEIR RANKS.

LOOK WHAT THAT DID FOR ME. I'M CONFIDENT IT COULD TRANSFORM MY PEOPLE... IT COULD BRING THE PEACE WE'VE BEEN FIGHTING FOR.

FORGIVE ME IF I DON'T SHARE YOUR OPTIMISTIC IMPRESSION OF YOUR PEOPLE.



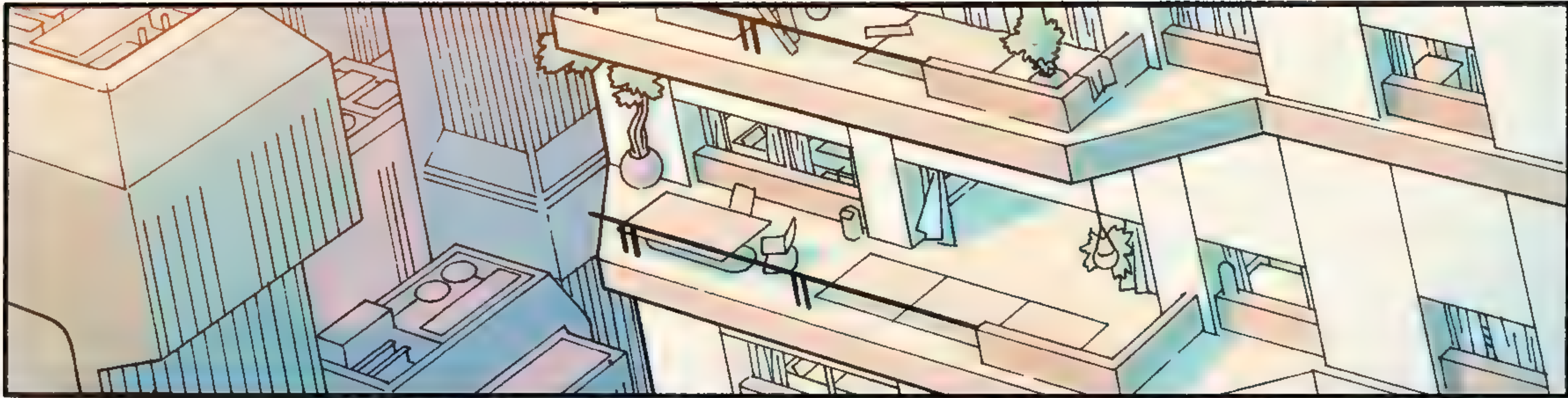
I'VE GOT COUNTLESS PLANETARY SYSTEMS TO REPORT TO, THEY RELY ON ME FOR THEIR PROTECTION.

I DON'T KNOW THAT I CAN JUST...

I'VE GOT A LOT TO CONSIDER. PLEASE...

...LEAVE ME.





IT WAS UNSETTLING TO SEE HIM THAT WAY--LIKE TALKING TO SOMEONE I DIDN'T KNOW.

ALLEN AND I HAVE A BOND... THIS SITUATION ON EARTH... IT HAS ME CONCERNED.

AS IT SHOULD. JUST BECAUSE THEY SAY THEY'RE NOT GOING TO CAUSE ANY TROUBLE, DOESN'T MEAN YOU SHOULD BELIEVE THEM.

YOUR PEOPLE ARE VERY GOOD LIARS.

OKAY, I DESERVE THAT.

THIS PLACE IS TOTALLY GREAT. I WISH ALLEN HAD JUST LET ME STAY HERE WHILE YOU WERE GONE.

AND I'M GLAD HE KEPT YOU OUT OF TROUBLE.

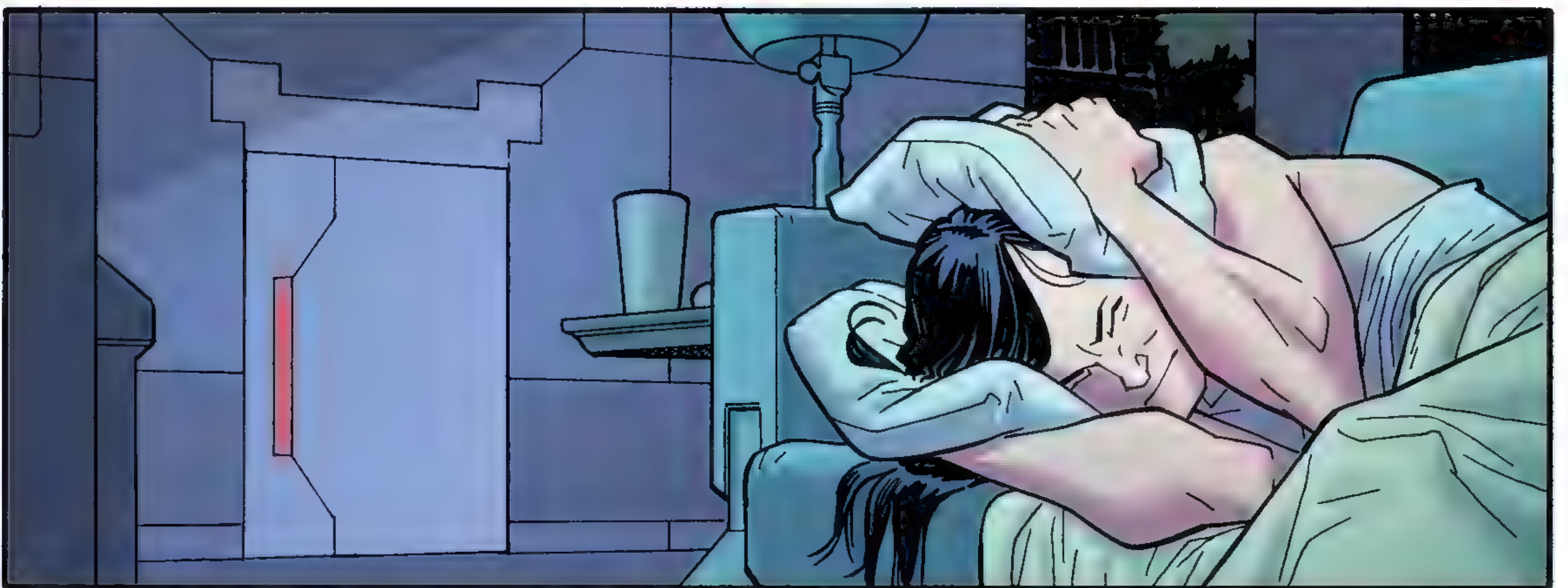
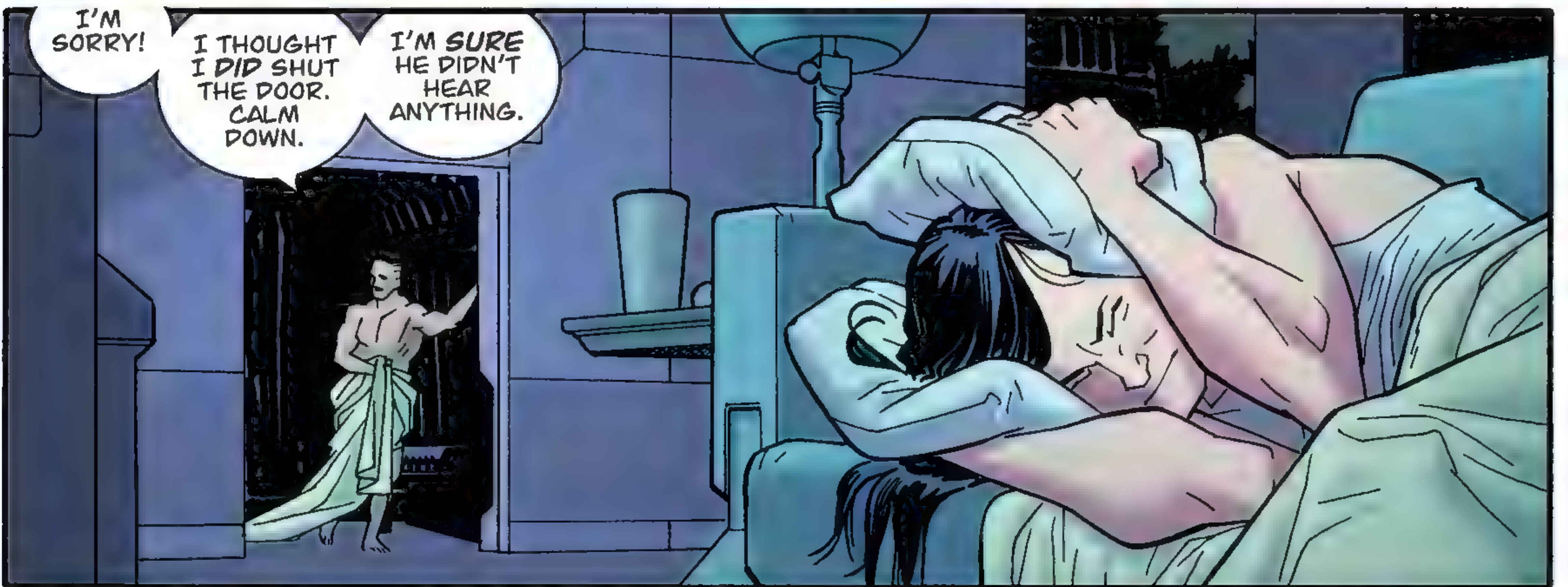
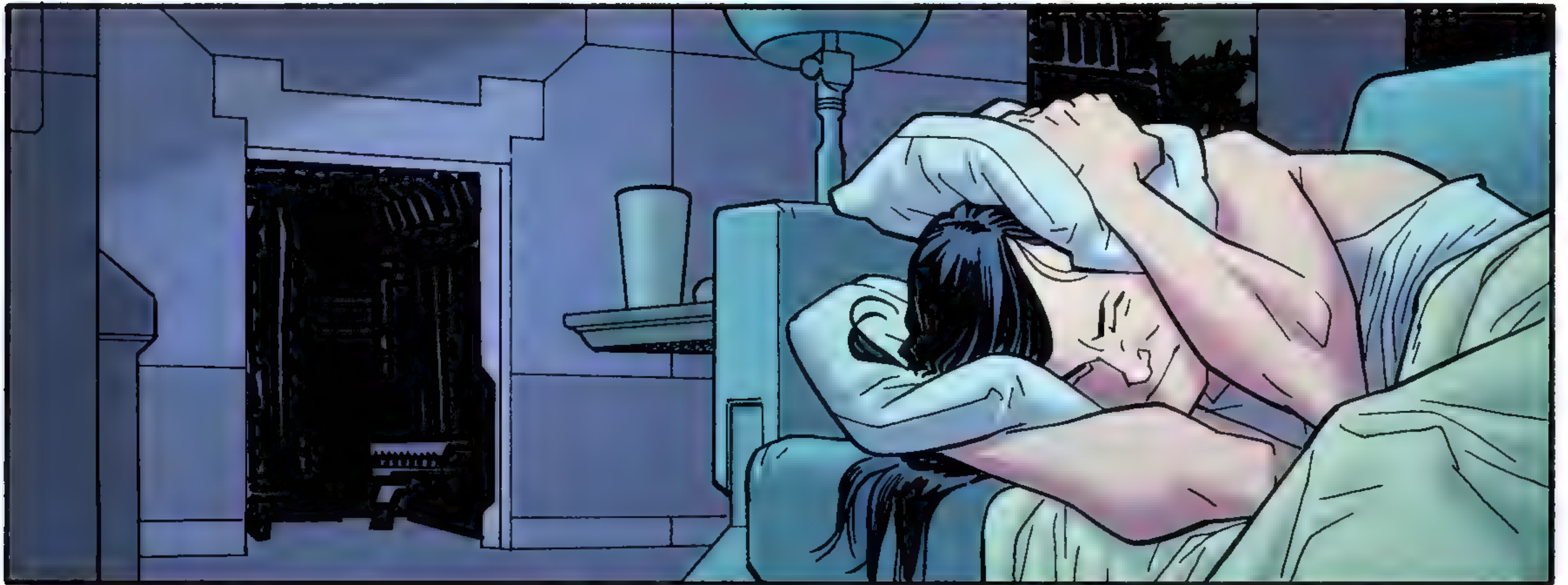
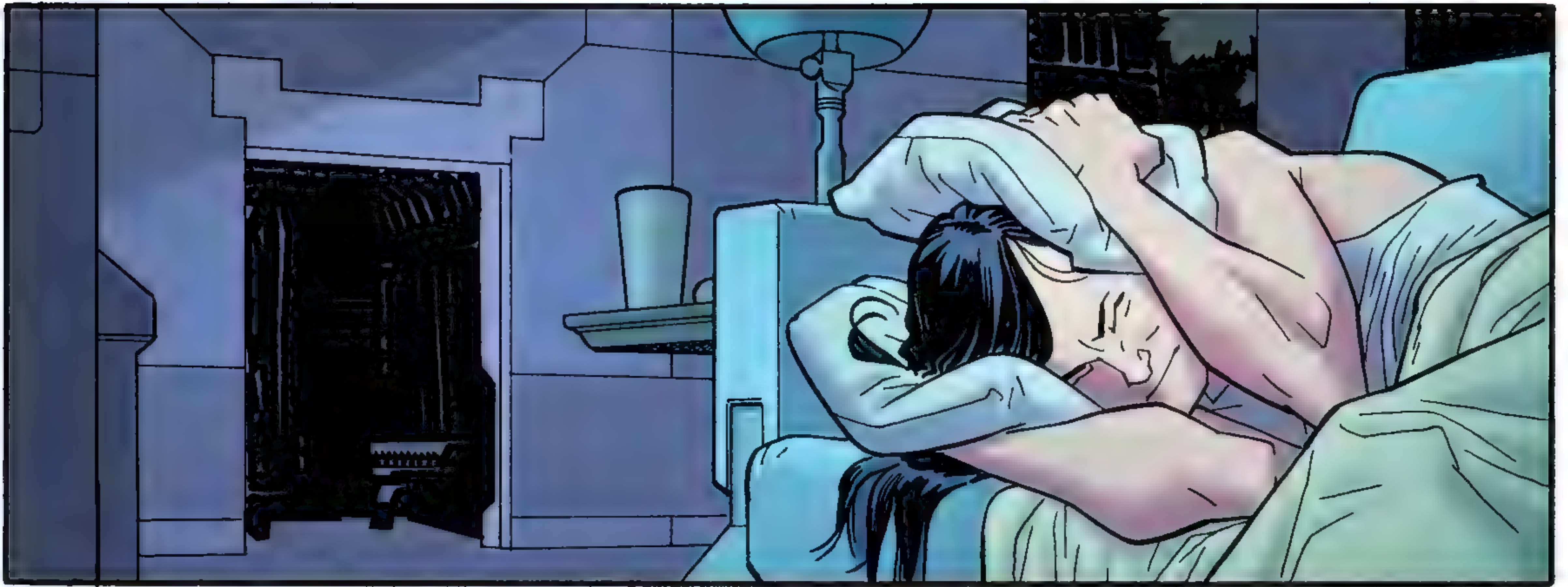
I'LL NEED TO BUY A BED FOR YOUR ROOM TOMORROW-- BUT FOR TONIGHT, YOU CAN JUST SLEEP ON THE COUCH.

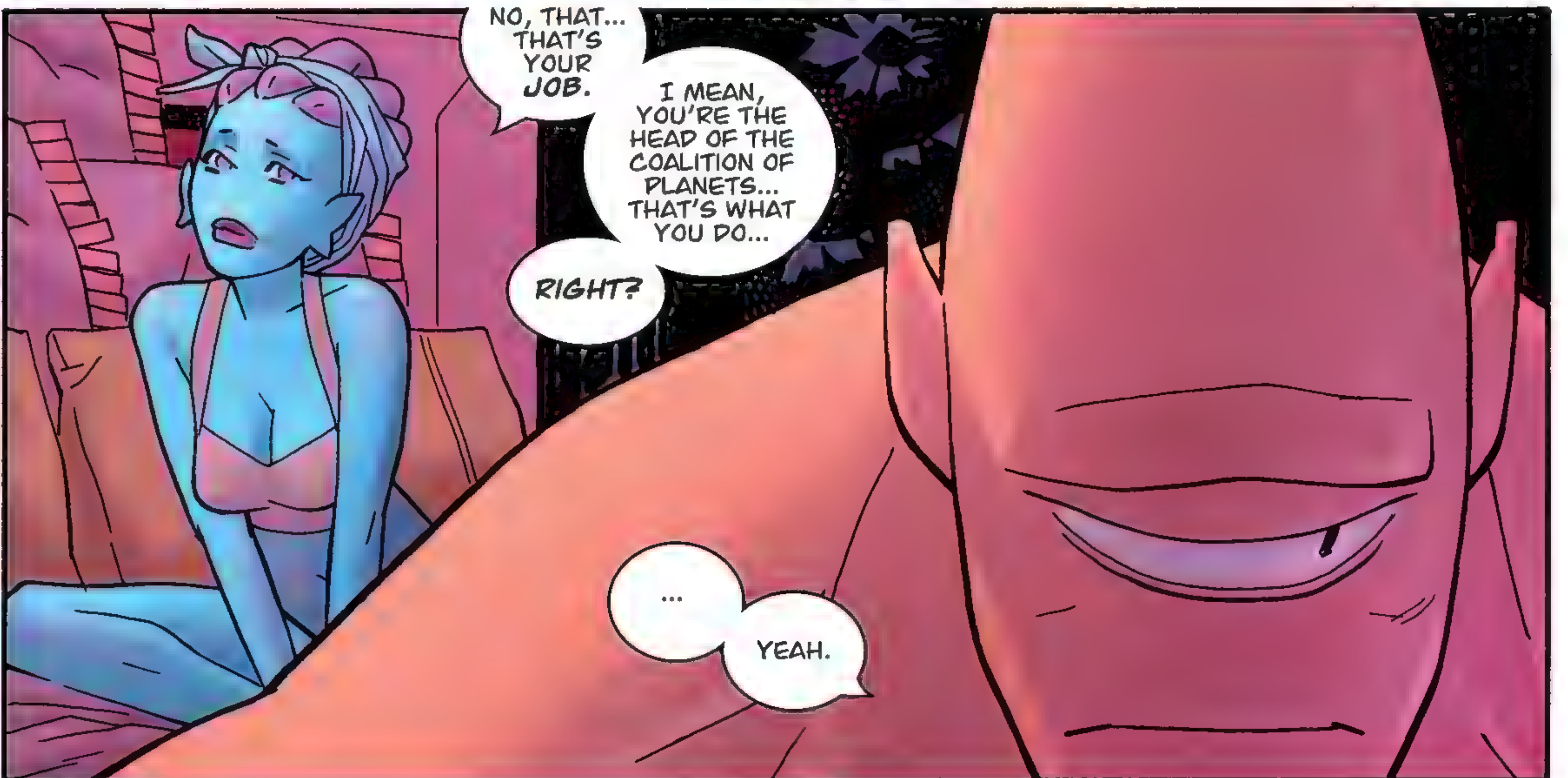
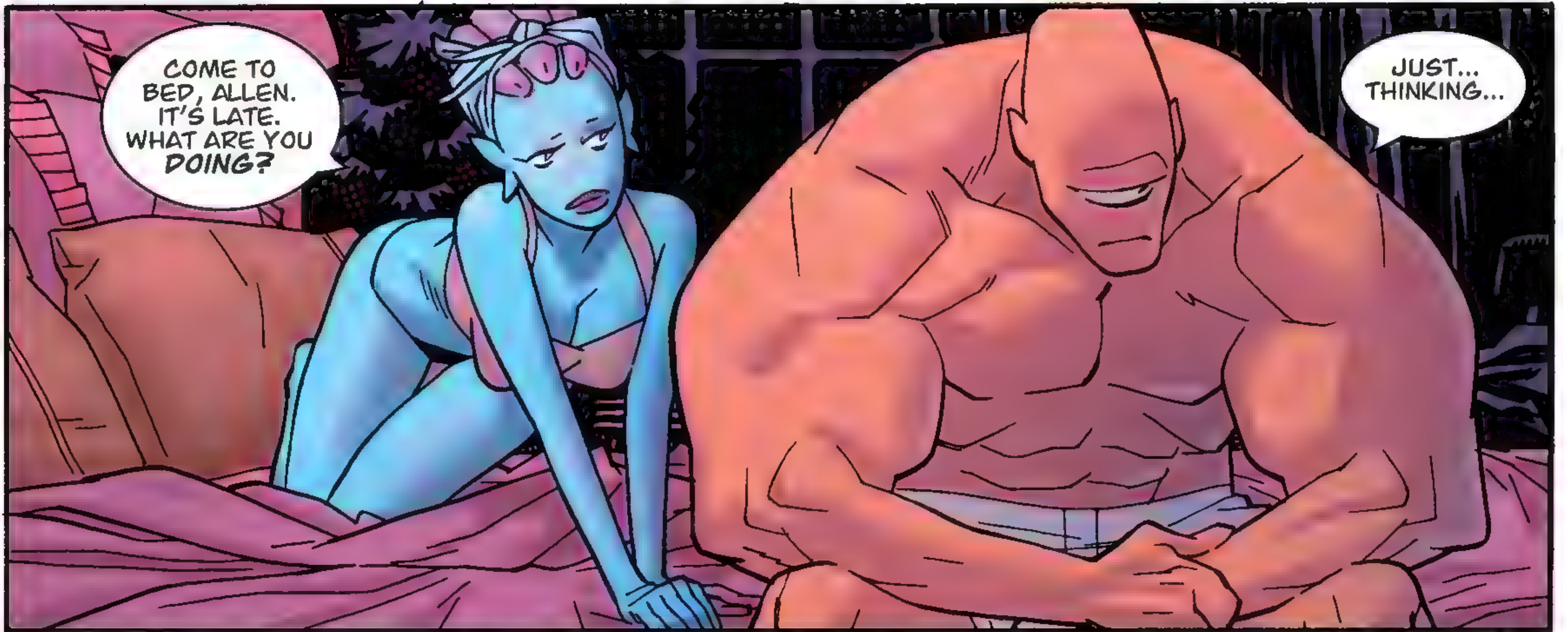
NO WORRIES.

ANYTHING WILL BE BETTER THAN STAYING WITH ALLEN AND TELIA. I HEARD EVERYTHING AT THAT PLACE...

AND I MEAN... UGH... EVERYTHING.

WELL, YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT HERE...







SLEEP WELL?

YEAH.

ALLEN AND TELIA TAKE CARE OF YOU WHILE I WAS AWAY?

OOH, SORE SUBJECT. YOU'RE NO LONGER A CHILD. DULY NOTED.

DO YOU LIKE IT HERE?

SO, ARE WE GOING TO STAY HERE?

ON MY MOTHER'S PLANET--I'D BE AN ELDER, HELL--I'D BE **MONARCH** BY NOW. THEY "TOOK CARE OF ME" AS MUCH AS YOU WOULD NEED TO "TAKE CARE" OF AN ADULT.

I KIND OF DO. IT'S... BETTER THAN EARTH IN A LOT OF WAYS. PEOPLE SEEM MORE AWARE OF THE UNIVERSE AS A WHOLE. THE PEOPLE SEEM MUCH MORE ENLIGHTENED... I... NEVER CARED FOR EARTH ALL THAT MUCH.

OH? I DON'T KNOW THAT YOU SPENT ENOUGH TIME THERE, THEN. THERE'S A LOT TO LIKE.

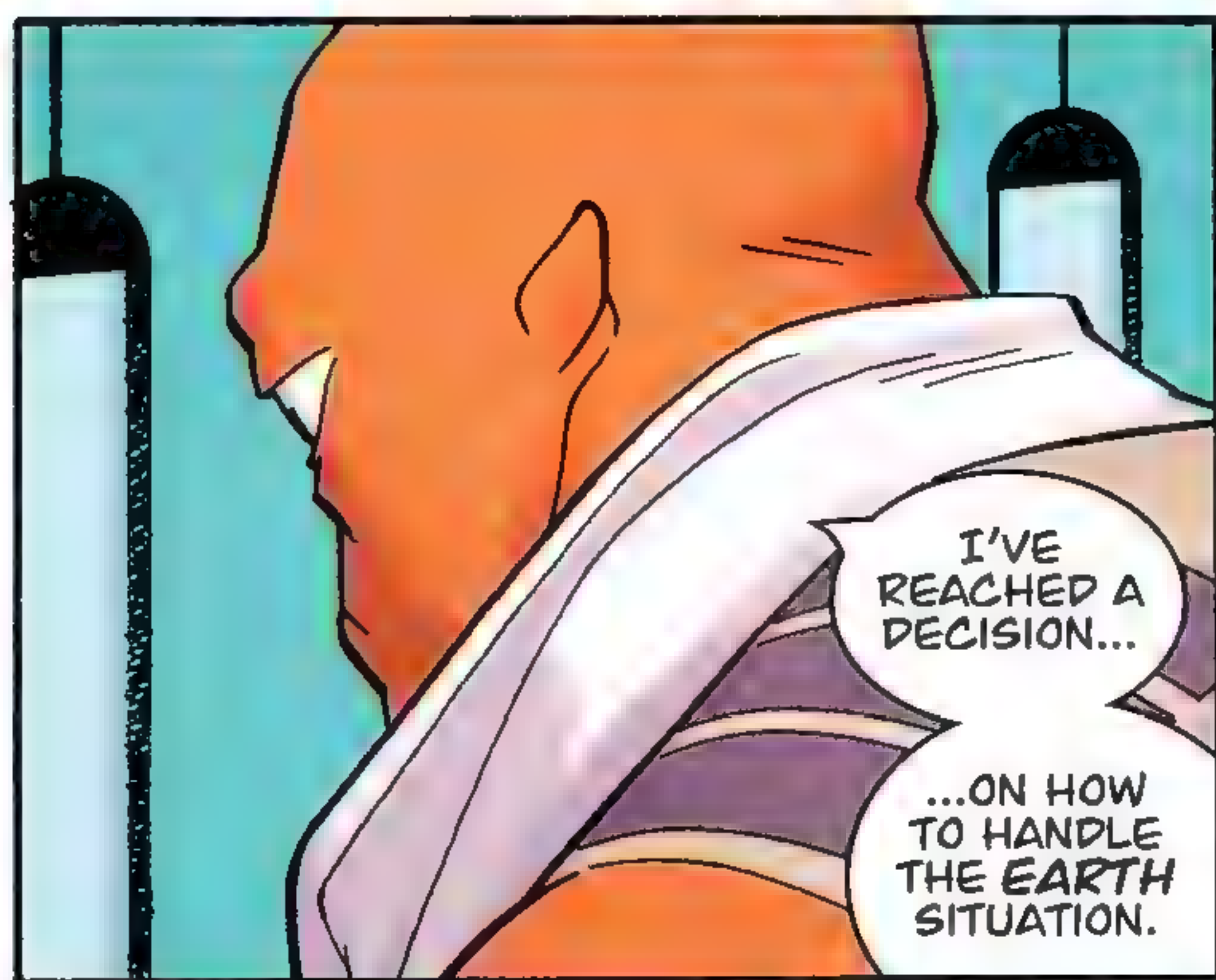
WHEN WAS THE LAST WAR THAT TOOK PLACE ON THIS PLANET-- THAT ONLY INVOLVED PEOPLE ON THIS PLANET? THE FACT THAT THE PEOPLE ON EARTH STILL FIGHT EACH OTHER... IT'S JUST... STUPID.

I'D WAGER YOU AND MARK CARE FOR EARTH FAR MORE THAN MOST PEOPLE ON EARTH CARE FOR EACH OTHER.

DO YOU THINK THAT'S A BAD THING?

...

I DON'T KNOW...





BEFORE HE DIED...
THAEDUS TOLD
YOU ABOUT
THE SCOURGE
VIRUS...
DIDN'T HE?



DON'T.
IT'S NO
LONGER
THERE.



WHERE
IS IT?

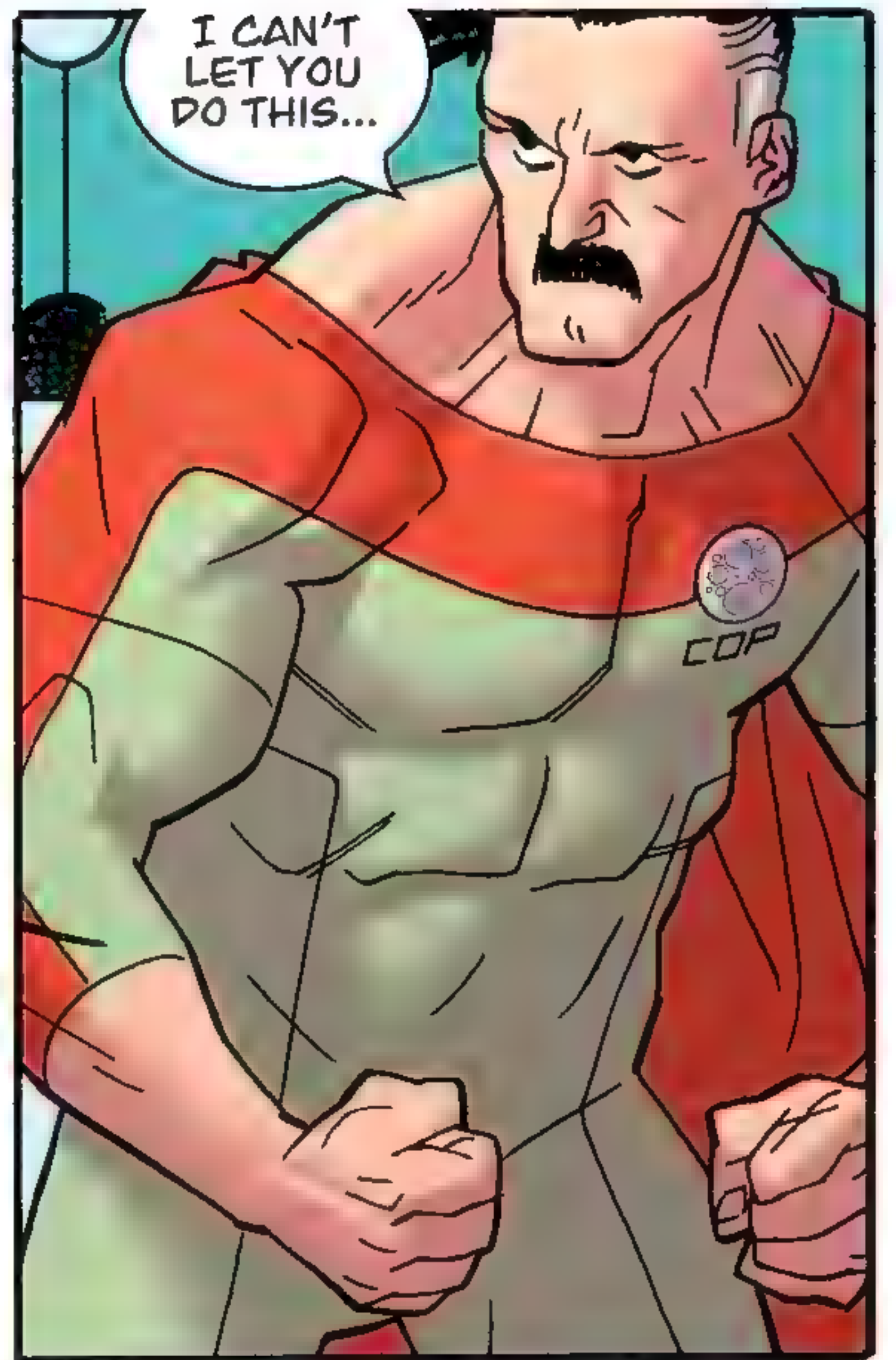


I'M SORRY, THIS
IS GOING TO GET
UGLY, BUT I JUST
COULDN'T DO THIS
WITHOUT TELLING
YOU FIRST.

I VALUE
OUR
FRIENDSHIP
TOO MUCH.

IT'S BEING
LOADED ON A
SHIP, THAT I AM
PERSONALLY
GOING TO TRAVEL
TO EARTH IN... WHERE I
WILL THEN INTRODUCE
THE VIRUS INTO
THE PLANET'S
ATMOSPHERE.

I'M
SORRY.



WRITE US @

INVINCIBLE@FUNKOTRON.COM

INVINCIBLE

Welcome back,

Three weeks after the pulse-pounding issue 84, we have issue 85! And we get to see artwork from the inimitable Invincible co-creator Cory Walker! Welcome back, Cory! He'll be with us next issue, and then we welcome back Ryan Ottley (whose pages for 87 are PHENOMENAL).

They totally are... almost as good as Cory's pages in 85 and 86... ALMOST. HA! I'm joking! And it's Robert in italics... so people don't think Sina's being a jerk.

Before I dive into letters, I want to clarify something from last month's penvincipals... A fan had asked what sales had to be to earn an Image book getting an action figure line. In true snarky fashion, I said it had to be a NYT Bestseller to begin with. While I was teasing, I did not want this to appear either condescending to Image creators NOR did I intend to discount Invincible's status as a New York Times Bestseller. Sometimes silly retorts end up having more heft than expected, and I apologize.

And you ruin everything by apologizing for them, Sina. LAME!

I'm sorry, Robert.

Dear Invincipals,

Me and my brother, are huge fans of Invincible. We love it. Anyway, after the (somewhat anti-clamactic) ending of the Viltrumite War, we began reading the letters pages, to see what people were saying about Invincible and the Viltrumites. We have a few questions that we would like to pose to the strategic planners behind the coalition of planets.

1. Reanivincibles. If a normal reaniman can slap Invincible around (as seen in issues 6 and 20 etc.), and Invincible can slap a Viltrumite around (as seen in the entire Viltrumite War), imagine what a reanivincible could do. We're not quite sure, but he could probably slap somebody around. Why weren't any of the eight reanivincibles put to use?

Mark's strength wasn't up to its current levels back in the day. He's gotten quite a bit stronger since those earlier fights, and it doesn't quite match up.

True. And not all Viltrumites are of completely equal strength. I should do a ranking of everyone's powers at some point... but that would take away all the fun. Also, there are things like Conquest, being stronger than Mark--but Mark still being able to beat him through sheer will... so rankings don't really matter.

2. The Geldarians. There are kind of a lot of them. some of them have tech jackets of equal or greater power to that of Zach's. Even if Zach was less helpful to the war effort than you made him out to be, (which we strongly suspect he was) couldn't the bazillions of other tech jackets in use been a little bit helpful?

Tech Jackets' capabilities are based on the wearer's own strength. Geldarians are an incredibly weak species, and they're scared shitless of Viltrumites. I wouldn't say that there are Geldarians stronger than Zack, but maybe there are some that are more in tune with their Tech Jackets...

There is no Geldarian that is even remotely as strong as Zack, with his Tech Jacket. His human physique makes him exponentially more powerful than them. And Zack kicked some ass in the Viltrumite War... whether you saw a lot of it or not. You think Allen would become buddies with a sissy?

3. Other dimensions. Viltrumites (Such as the alternate versions of Invincible, who we strongly suspect will one day return) have been known to be trapped in other dimensions with no way out. We doubt that Angstrom Levy was the only one capable of opening portals to other dimensions, and surely the Coalition would have been able to utilize somebody with a similar power.

Keep reading to find out.

And... that's a bit of a stretch. Angstrom Levy COULD BE the only one able to access other dimensions (except for Omnipotus) and it's unlikely the Coalition would have been able to FIND someone with those powers much less recruit them.

4. The equilibrium. This is the real reason we write you today. not a single person has mentioned this most beautiful of weaknesses that all Viltrumites share. Cecil utilized this weakness in issue 50 and it was only because of Robot's genius that Invincible escaped. The true beauty of this weakness is that the more powerful the viltrumite, the

weaker his equilibrium is!

Anyway, we're sorry for our rant, we really enjoy the book and look forward to more of the same slapping around and such.

Sincerely, Moses and Abram Goren.

Robert, got two cents on the equilibrium?

That is a weakness, not more heightened than any other race--it's just a weakness that applies to most organisms (bipedal at least) and it also applies to Viltrumites. I don't believe I ever said their weakness increases with their strength, did I? DID I?!

Dear Robert & Sina,

The characters in INVINCIBLE are amazing. I love how they evolve and change over time, and they always manage to surprise me. Tether Tyrant and Magmaniac were a fun villainous duo, and I was sad to see Magmaniac's demise. And Tether Tyrant's subsequent reaction and transformation was shocking, and changes the status quo for the character. Now, I know how much the INVINCIBLE team loves "Easter eggs", so I encoded the name of my favorite INVINCIBLE villain in the body of this letter – will you be the FIRST to decode it?

Reed Beebe
Kansas City, MO

I just did this montage- much like the one in Rosemary's Baby- trying to decode your message. After so many anagrams, furrowed brows, and a sick haircut by Vidal Sassoon, this is what I came up with: TETHER TYRANT.

Holy crap! It's encoded in this letter twice!

Dear R-Kirkman,

Just thought of something! Invincible has a lower case "i" on his chest--yet a capitol "I" on the cover logo!!! Let the debate--commence!!

This issue was a good, solid read, for sure. But the death of Magmaniac--if that was his name--was kind of, well...was it really cover-worthy? Least you're Calling villains by name this issue; small steps, friends, small steps.

I don't understand the whole Robot/ Rex thing? Wasn't it Rex inside Robot the whole time...

Uhhh, memory fails me. Robert?

Seriously? Guys. Robot was a little troll guy. Being in open air agitated his sensitive skin so he constructed ROBOT so that he could live through that construct. For a while, most people thought he was a real robot. He became infatuated with Monster Girl who he believed had a thing for Rex Splode, and he enlisted the aid of The Mauler Twins (remember them?) to assist him in cloning Rex's body, and transferring his consciousness into the new Rex Clone body. He then KILLED his little troll self (so Robot has technically died and this isn't even the original robot in the Rex body). He then revealed to everyone that he was not a real robot and started hanging out with the group in his new, younger, Rex clone body. His real name was Rudy, but no one ever called him that and he hated the name. So when Rex Splode died... he decided to take the name Rex to honor him. So now he's Rex.

It's not that hard to follow, right? And that was all off the top of my head, for the record. Let me know if I forgot anything.

It's a long way to issue #100, not to mention Tipperary, but I think you gotta spice up the in-between issues more! Where did Mark Grayson's mom Go with Omni Man, anyway? Where was Oliver Grayson/ Kid Omni Man this issue? Why did whatsisname yawn at me in the letter col this issue?? You know how easily offended I am. Btw, I read The Strange Talent of Luther Strode this week....bit Teen Wolf-y, but not bad. And in closing, Invincible probably is "The Best Superhero Comic Book In The Universe!"...if we're talking Image Universe, and how could we not be? Superhero is more like Super-Hero, you know; with a hyphen. Nearly everybody makes that mistake; like Spiderman is really Spider-Man.

Andrew J. Shaw

You're seeing Oliver now. Luther Strode is awesome and gets awesomer.

In my brief research, superhero and super-hero both work. It's not like Spiderman where a hero becomes Jewish without the hyphen (too much?).

Too much.

Ok Kirkman & Co, here I go...

Well, first off, Invincible 83 was really entertaining. It brought in many different aspects and characters of the Invincible Universe outside of Mark and set them in motion again. I love it.

But now for my question. Rus Wooton is not mentioned much, but when his name is brought up it is always to praise his lettering work. Now, I love Invincible and Walking Dead and I see that he letters both. And then I noticed that basically every other book I read from you, he is the letterer. I have always enjoyed how the text looks in these books. It has a very 'comicy' yet easy to read quality to it.

He's a machine- that guy! We love him!

Who?

Well, I guess my question comes now...How does Rus actually do it? I want to really appreciate the art of the lettering also. I would appreciate it more if I knew what he actually does. Is it as easy as using a certain font on the computer or does he actually hand write everything in these books, keeping it uniform in every single issue?

The letters are something taken for granted in comics, I feel and some books look horrible because the lettering is ugly or unreadable. So, again.... how does he do it?

Thanks and Happy New Year!!!! (This is printed in an issue around New Year's, right?)

-- Mike
New Jersey

I really wish that the Sarah Jessica Parker movie I Don't Know How She Does It was relevant, then I could make a reference to it. Sigh.

Rus uses Adobe Illustrator and letters the books digitally. There are plenty of books out there on how to do it. How to be as good as Rus? I don't know how to advise you on being the best!

Awwwwwww, Sina... you're sweet. John Workman is the best. Even Rus will tell you that. Rus is second best (Just kidding Eliopoulos). Then there's Todd Klein, Tom Orzechowski, Ken Lopez, Richard Starkings, Pat Brosseau... mainly guys with names that vary in spelling difficulty from hard to impossible, mostly.

Robert,

My love for Invincible is ineffable. Thank you for providing us with such a fun, dynamic, and aesthetically mind-blowing book!

That said, I'm growing a little concerned for Eve's character; she's really been taking a back seat for awhile now. I'm ecstatic that she's put on some weight (she looks much better now, in my opinion) and I'm equally glad to see her regaining some confidence, but I'd like to see her resume her role as a super heroine. Eve is a wonderful character and I'd hate to see her degenerate into an emotionally distraught housewife. I know she can't hold her own with the Viltrumites, but it would be refreshing to see her put down a villain without relying on 'vince for help (or anyone else, for that matter). Maybe it's time to give Killcannon a costume change and an equipment upgrade?

- Kyle Saunders

Eve will have more to do action-wise in coming issues. Killcannon's involvement is entirely possible.

But he won't show up.

Huh? Eve will be kicking butt very soon, I promise.

Hey writing Master,

So with an email addy like mine you're probably think this'll be a doozy (yepper). Really though it's not. I'm sending this in response to another letter I just read (and sorry to say, I don't read many). I just finished reading Invincible #83 and got to the end where a loving father wrote in about Atom Eve's weight gain. I don't really know why that letter pulled me and got me to read it, but I do know it struck a little cord. I wish to echo his sentiments, but also wish to say thank you for the extra variety she represents. I happen to like the typical wasp shape comic female character...but I also like more than just that one shape. Women come in so many different shapes, sizes, skin tones, and facial patterns. Just like with men, that's one of the great things about humans. Adding in different cultures just increases the spice of life. How freakin' boring is it with every one's the same? Which brings me back to your comic and the variety. The attractive

wasp shape has been done, and done, and ...done. All shapes have their own unique attractiveness and I think the modern fan boy (who's probably closer to my age of 41 now lol) should have the maturity to understand that, at least by this point in his life. As to H/C Gerry and his daughter...heroes (the special and regular kind ;) do love women that aren't the stereotypical body shape found in imaginary worlds. We love them so much, we'll gladly marry them. Just like I did, and my brother, and my brothers.

There's so much more to a person, and even imaginary characters, than just the surface impressions.

Writing Master, you keep on poppin' out those great stories. I happen to love those too and I thank you for them.

Sincerely,
James Poidog

What's truly funny to me about Eve's weight gain is that it happened just months before the crazy hullabaloo over Starfire's representation in the New 52. Perfect timing to prove yet again that creator-owned comics are a place for more variety.

Boo-ya! Screw corporate comics! Right?

Hi Mr. Kirkman,

Never in my life did I think that one day I'd be writing a letter in about a comic book. In all honesty, I began reading Invincible so I could mock my boyfriend and make fun of him for reading a dorky comic. Now he teases me because I'm completely hooked. I didn't want to read every back issue because I knew if I finished them all waiting every month for the new one would drive me insane. That didn't happen because I couldn't put the series down, it's so good! No one in my family ever read comics and reading them just seemed like the farthest thing from my interests. I always thought comic books were not serious and lacked any substance. After reading Invincible, that has completely changed. Your writing is incredible and the artwork is amazing.

It's probably not surprising but Atom Eve is my favorite (I do NOT like Dupli-Slut, and enjoyed The Immortal's head getting thrown through one of her copies during the Invincible War). You developed Eve's character so well it has me at a loss for words (I am usually complaining about how angry I am at Omni-Man for what he did to Debbie- he still hasn't COMPLETELY redeemed himself, how everyone treats Art badly, how horrid Dupli-Slut (I REALLY don't like her) is and now how Monster Girl is acting towards Rex (Robot)-reading the last page of # 83 resulted in yelling) but no complaints about Eve.

SOMEbody has opinions about Dupli-Kate! It's not easy to love her after that dinner...

Mark is not at all what I thought a comic book superhero would be like. It's interesting to see him trying to balance his values with his superhero work, especially when you have written the back stories of a few of the guys he fights (Levy and Powerplex) and everything that happened with his father.

After reading the first issue of Invincible (I like Super Dinosaur too, The Walking Dead for some reason I can't get into) I ended my lifetime comic book boycott and found a new genre of literature I enjoy. I am in grad school right now studying to be a teacher- when I have my own classroom -comic books will be available in my class library. I have even started using them in lesson plans I do for school (I found a good science comic series).

Keep up the great work!!!!

Sincerely,

Rachel

Glad to convert you, Rachel. Have you tried reading a whole volume or two of The Walking Dead? That book has a different tone and pace, and sometimes it takes readers up to volume three before they're hooked.

Don't teach your students to call her Dupli-Slut...

Hey, awesome letter Rachel. If only everyone was willing to try comics in order to be able to make fun of someone they cared about. Then we'd have tons more readers. Spread the word, everyone. Get people to try and get ammunition with which to ridicule you--you'll make them readers for life! Thanks for writing in.

That's all, folks! We'll see you again in three weeks for the next issue, and three weeks after that for issue 87! The art in both of those books is pure, undiluted AWESOME.

-Sina Grace

An issue every three weeks for the rest of the year! Making up for the horrible schedule we've had for over a year! We care!

-Robert Kirkman

DON'T MISS THE NEXT ISSUE!



INVINCIBLE #86
ON SALE DECEMBER 2011



THE INFINITE #4
ON SALE NOW



SUPER DINOSAUR #6
ON SALE NOW



HAUNT #19
ON SALE NEXT WEEK

The Third Degree:

BLAIR BUTLER

IMAGE COMICS'
MONTHLY Q&A
SESSION

Blair Butler is a writer, producer, and on-air comic book correspondent for G4's *Attack of the Show*. Her first comic book, *Heart*, (with art by the fantastic Kevin Mellon) tells the story of a young cage fighter who is quite good at punching dudes in the face until they go to sleep. The first issue hits store shelves Nov. 2nd. She has also appeared on Comedy Central, E!, MTV, and wrote and directed a ridiculous zombie pilot for VH1, as well as G4's animated "Slasher School" series of animated shorts. You can see her weekly comic book reviews at www.G4tv.com/FreshInk.

What are you working on right now?

Wrapping up *Heart* issue #4 and writing/producing/corresponding for G4's *Attack of the Show*. So it's a good mix of scripting tragic, comic book punching -- and scripting "critical commentary" for videos of guys getting tragically punched in the nuts for a TV show. I'm also about to leave for New York Comic Con. I've been to NYCC every year since it launched, but this is the first year I'll be there with a book of my own. So that's a pretty good/slightly scary feeling. Plus, I'll get to see *Heart* artist Kevin Mellon there. It's like we had a crazy, comic book baby together -- but we've only met in person once.

What's the best part of your job?

Getting to talk comics and MMA on a daily basis. Getting to meet great comic book creators -- and great fighters. I'm also blessed to work with some really amazing people behind the scenes at AOTS. Oh, and sometimes we have wild animals on the set. Like a surfing llama. That was a pretty good day.

What's the worst part of your job?

Attack of the Show is live 5 days a week, 50 weeks a year, so there's zero down time. Have you ever seen a hamster running in one of those little plastic wheels? It's like that, but the hamster never gets off the damn wheel. Although instead of a water bottle, the hamster gets a coffee drip. So that helps. I also get to work with a few other incredibly talented writers on *Attack*, including comic book scribe Gerry Duggan (*Infinite Horizon*, *Last Christmas*).

How did you first discover comics?

My dad took me to Clint's Comics in Kansas City and let me buy whatever I wanted from the quarter bin. I grew up on old, discounted, dog-eared issues of *She-Hulk*, *EC Horror Comics*, and *Werewolf by Night*. Then, somehow I persuaded my dad to buy me "*Batman: The Cult*" at age, I dunno, 8 or 9. I'm sure he thought, "Hey, it's Batman, this is fine for a kid" -- but at the time was one of the most violent mainstream comics ever released. And, of course, I loved it. Bernie Wrightson drawing an axe murder! In a Batman book! It was insane! So then I hunted down (Wrightson's) stuff on *Cycle of the Werewolf*, and all those Marvel Graphic Novels he did -- which eventually lead to the *New Mutants* MGN... Basically, the *New Mutants* were my gateway drug. After the Batman axe murder.

What's the strangest thing a fan has ever said to you?

"You're not as fat as you are on TV."

Who is the biggest influence on your work?

This one is easy. Most influenced by Jason Aaron, Brian Wood, and Ed Brubaker. Most inspired by Gail Simone, Greg Rucka, and Jonathan Hickman.

What is the single work of which you're most proud?

Honestly, *Heart*. It's a story I've been dying to tell -- that just happens to be full of fellas beatin' each other up. And the old "Slasher School" animated shorts we did at G4. Naked Werewolf. Need I say more?

Own up to one of your guilty pleasures.

Project Runway and *Work of Art* on Bravo. So much drama. So much pretension. Also *Spartacus* on Starz. OH MY GOODNESS THE GRATUITOUS EVERYTHING!

What was the last comic book you bought?

Oh jeez. I mean, I buy boatloads. It'd be too hard to list them all. I buy about 40 bucks of new comics and trades each week. It's like having a crack habit.

Who would play you in a movie about your life?

Shelley Duvall.

Pick three things you couldn't live without.

I could live without a lot of stuff. But life wouldn't be much fun without cupcakes, videogames (*Gears*, *Fallout*, *Uncharted*, *C.O.D.*, etc.), and good brunch places. I'm a power-bruncher. Sunday morning is my Friday night.

What's the strangest thing you have in your house?

A huge, Sideshow Collectibles, X-3 Beast maquette statue. Dude looks like a naked, blue werewolf. Also, I'll soon have the last page of *Heart* issue #1 framed and hanging on my wall -- if you've seen it, you'd know why it's a...uh... "conversation piece."

What music are you listening to these days?

An odd mix. Some really good stuff for *Heart* though -- if you read the book, the fighters' entrance music is big part of it. So songs like *Hometown Hero* by Big K.R.I.T. with Yelawolf, *Beautiful Lasers* by Lupe Fiasco, and *Reach for the Sky* by Social Distortion.

What is your favorite film of all time?

Toss up between *Blade Runner* (Director's cut) and *Annie Hall*.

When was the last time you were truly frightened?

When I went skydiving. My hand was shaking so badly when I signed the release form -- the one where you basically say, "I'm not gonna sue if I pancake to the earth and die," -- that I could barely write my name. But I did it. And it was amazing-* (*-ly scary).

What would you like to see happen in comics in the next 12 months?

Totally selfish answer: I'd like to put more comics out into the world. I love this.

What the world needs now is...

To calm down. Everybody calm down.

unbrok
the i word

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Question of the Month

what's your favorite
tool of the trade?

"The internet. I live in Ontario, my artist in New York, colorist in Illinois, letterer in Michigan and publisher in California, but it all works thanks to web-tastic goodness."

Jim Zubkavich
SKULLKICKERS

"The pencil. Ever since my chubby toddler hands were able to grasp one, it's the one tool I've used consistently to this day."

Joshua Luna
WHISPERS

"My Wacom Cintiq tablet."

Joe Eisma
MORNING GLORIES

"My favorite tool for creating comics is definitely a program called Scrivener. It lets you write visually, so that I can see the pages as separate units that can be moved around. Perfect for outlining and story arc planning, and simple to use. Couldn't live without it!"

Joshua Hale Fialkov
LAST OF THE GREATS

"The most useful tool for any comic book creator is nagging, debilitating envy."

Tim Seeley
HACK SLASH, BLOODSTRIKE

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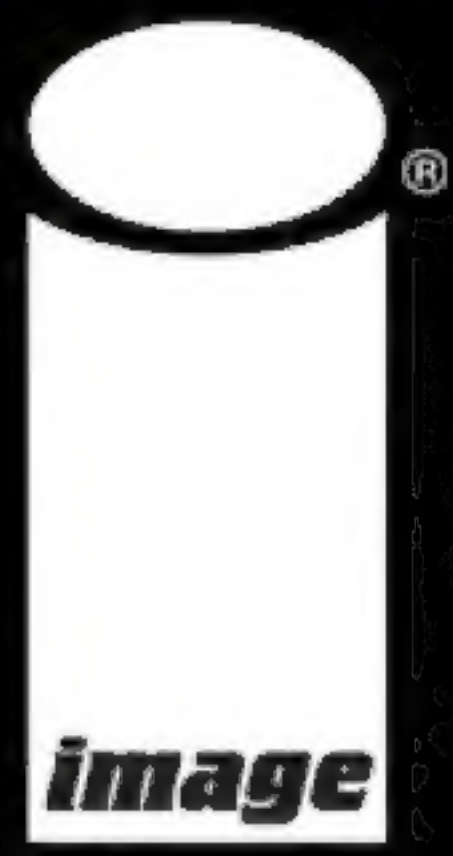


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